

‘THIS EARTHLY STAGE’

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‘THIS EARTHLY STAGE’
World and Stage in Late Medieval
and Early Modern England

edited by

Brett D. Hirsch and Christopher Wortham



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INTRODUCTION

Christopher Wortham

Wee all (that's Kings and all) but Players are
Upon this earthly Stage.¹

The Perth Medieval and Renaissance Group (PMRG) was founded in 1980 in emulation of the Sydney Medieval and Renaissance Group, but from its earliest days PMRG established its own distinctive characteristics as a forum for multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary scholarship in Western Australia. PMRG has contributed significantly to the development of the University of Western Australia (UWA) as a leading centre for medieval, Renaissance, and early modern studies in Australasia. Since 1995 UWA has been the home for *Parergon*, the journal of the Australian and New Zealand Association for Medieval and Early Modern Studies. More recently, UWA has also become the administrative centre for the ARC-funded Network for Early European Research (NEER).

The papers gathered in this volume derive principally from the 2006 PMRG symposium. Each year the symposium is grounded upon a theme that offers a degree of cohesion without being overly restrictive. Publication of papers from the annual symposia has become a well-established tradition. In 2006 the theme was 'World as stage, stage as world'. As might have been expected, a number of the offerings centred on Shakespeare, but a number also focused on contemporaries, particularly Christopher Marlowe, and those that were on Shakespeare evinced a refreshing variety in emphasis. PMRG is equally proud to present work by some of the most eminent and established scholars alongside the offerings of a number of newer and younger figures who, we are confident, are on their way into establishing their own reputations. Thirty-five papers by scholars from twelve countries were

¹ John Davies, *The Scourge of Folly* (London, 1611; STC 6341), Q2^v.

delivered at the 2006 symposium. Those papers that have been selected for publication here are representative of the diversity of the contributors and the variety of their disciplinary and geographical provenance.

Ordering the World

The editors deliberated on the question of how to order this volume. Several possibilities suggested themselves. However, each of these posited an intrusion of one sort or another, and in the end we decided that a straightforward alphabetical sequence would be best. Accordingly, the following descriptive account of the contributions adheres to that alphabetical sequence.

It is appropriate rather than fortuitous that the first essay in this volume should be Michael Best's "Bi-fold Authority": The Electronic Re-creation of Shakespeare'. As founder of the Internet Shakespeare Editions (ISE), he is recognized as the doyen of Shakespeare editing in the new electronic medium of the Internet. This essay gives an account both of the theoretical issues that surround the whole issue of electronic editions and of the process that he has initiated in what is still an early stage of the project. Beginning with the basic fact that he and his team are engaged in presenting 'works of an earlier age in the most modern of media', Best asks himself and us, his readers, whether 'the Shakespeare in an Internet Shakespeare Edition is or is not our contemporary'. With explicit reference to Jan Kott's formative postwar book *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*, and the stream in Shakespeare criticism that the book initiated, Best takes the view that, far from being in any sense universal, 'Shakespeare's text is [...] deeply contingent on the culture of the reader and the circumstances of the moment of creation, and unstable both in meaning and in the choices of editors who are expected to create a seamless modern text from what are often unreliable and contradictory early publications'. Taking an unapologetic stance on the issue of purity of text, and critical apparatus, Best addresses himself to the benefits that electronic editing promises for a new generation of Shakespeare readers and scholars. One immediate benefit is the ISE's provision of a database of Shakespeare in Performance in both stage and film mediums. The ISE is already working with a number of Shakespeare associations and festivals in collecting and collating materials. Reviews of productions are also being sought. Best acknowledges that issues of the right to reproduce performance material and to reprint reviews pose some problems, but takes the optimistic view that 'those who participate in the theatre community [will] become keen to see their work included, once they see the site and what it promises'. Some notable

instances of film productions are then discussed as adjuncts to the Internet study of Shakespeare in performance.

Michael Best insists that the Internet Shakespeare Editions are not intended exclusively or even primarily as repositories for Shakespeare in performance but that the programme is strongly directed towards accurate textual scholarship. Like the editors working on hard-copy texts, the ISE team of editors argues against 'the ideal of a single imagined authorial text'. Taking *Hamlet* as an instance, he demonstrates that the brave new Arden, which gives three major texts (Q1, Q2, and F1) alongside, in the way it is set out effectively privileges Q2. A modern electronic edition, Best argues, is able to move continuously between variants in a way that highlights difference without privileging one variant in particular. Most importantly, Best maintains, the concept of tagging in an SGML environment allows for information to be tagged as metadata in a way that would be impossible in the fixed text of a printed edition. With the right software, it becomes possible to read the text in a variety of ways. Despite a number of inherent complications, the prospects offered by a set of Internet texts of Shakespeare open an exciting new vista of editorial possibilities.

Victoria Bladen brings an excitingly fresh set of perceptions to her essay, 'Pruning the Tree of Virtue in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*'. She combines an expertise in art history with an equal level of assurance in the domain of historicist literary criticism. Bladen offers a close examination of emblematic tree imagery in Renaissance painting for a fuller and richer understanding of the rape and mutilation of Lavinia in *Titus Andronicus*. With reference to works by Mantegna, Perugino, Lotto, and others, she draws on a rich tradition of moral topography established through the medium of arboreal symbolism. Although the identification of virtue in women in classical mythology and literature gives powerful instances of such symbolism, for example in the myth of Daphne, there is also, and perhaps primarily for the Renaissance artists, an 'articulation of virtue as arboreal' that 'evolved from biblical passages and metaphors'. Her Old Testament sources include Genesis and the Psalms, and from the New Testament she adduces exempla from Romans and Revelation. From the premise that the extensive body of arboreal symbolism in Renaissance literary and material culture meant that arboreal references were not evoked in a vacuum of meaning, Bladen argues that reference to the iconography provides a significant contextual background in which to place a particular vein of imagery in William Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, thereby providing a context that has been absent from the critical literature until recently.

As a result of a bad decision made by Titus, his enemies take their revenge on Lavinia. The appalling cruelty of what is done to her has been a barrier to an

appreciation of the play's moral purpose, but 'when Shakespeare's arboreal imagery is viewed alongside the metaphors and iconographical traditions surrounding trees, it acquires significance beyond grotesque violence'. Two engravings by Mantegna represent the lopped tree in terms of virtue deserted; these and other images combine to present Lavinia, with her hands cut off, as a lopped tree. In the play, Lavinia becomes closely identified with the fate of Rome itself and in the fight for her by the two Goths she 'replaces Rome as the contested prize'. Bladen extends the fate of Lavinia in relation to Rome, invoking the popular theory of *translatio imperii* to see her fate as being potentially mirrored in that of England as well. In subtle and complex ways, Queen Elizabeth herself is evoked, both positively and negatively. Whatever the meanings of the play may be for the prospects of justice in an English society under threat, Bladen concludes that 'Shakespeare's arboreal imagery is directly relevant to the interrogation of revenge in *Titus*' and that the play calls for mediation between mercy and justice.

From Renaissance iconography we move to the contemporary as Alan Brissenden brings our focus to Shakespeare production in Australia in the twentieth century, and to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in particular. As an internationally recognized authority on Shakespeare and dance, Brissenden is familiar with productions of a play that has provided full potentiality for realization in dance, but for this survey he considers productions in their wider or widest contexts of performance. The account begins with one of Australia's most adventurous theatrical entrepreneurs at the turn of the twentieth century, George Musgrove. The 1903 touring production was effectively that of Robert Courtneidge at the Prince's Theatre in Manchester. With major parts played by visiting English actors, this production owed much to Purcell's *Fairy Queen* and included much of Mendelssohn's music for the play as well as the overture to Weber's *Oberon*. In the nineteenth-century tradition of productions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, music was prominent, and indeed seems to have been more operatic than theatrical. Brissenden mentions that, following the precedent of a Covent Garden production of 1840, there was a female Oberon and a female Puck. One wonders whether the female Oberon, a tradition that was to endure into at least one early silent movie production, was influenced by a homophobic embarrassment at having a male king of the fairies, but Brissenden does not enlighten us on this point. What Brissenden does make clear is that despite the touring nature of the production, Musgrove managed to provide the sorts of lavish proscenium arch illusionistic sets that were the stock in trade of metropolitan theatres.

Brissenden next goes on to give an account of Allan Wilkie's production some twenty years later and makes the important point that this was the work of the first

Australian Shakespearean company. Wilkie played Bottom himself and, in the actor-manager tradition, it seems, expanded the Pyramus and Thisbe business at the expense of the lovers' scenes. An interesting feature, and for the subsequent history of theatre a significant one, was Wilkie's decision to reject a showy set and to return as far as possible 'to the simple conditions of the Elizabethan stage'. However, thirty years later, John Alden turned back to Victorian spectacle. Brissenden gives a splendidly detailed and informative account of Alden's work, placing it well within the purview of the Australian theatre of the 1950s. Against this backdrop of elegant but evanescent theatre we are able to place the extraordinary achievement of John Bell and his contemporaries from the 1960s onwards, and even though Brissenden does not overtly make the comparison, he usefully gives us a strong sense of how far late twentieth-century Australian theatre has come since Wilkie and Alden. We are given a range of more recent productions, including those of Jim Sharman and Glenn Elston. This essay is most valuable for identifying, through analysis of various productions, the currents and crosscurrents that have made Australian theatre what it is today and takes us with him to what 'can be confidently thought of as an Australian style'.

Darryl Chalk's essay, 'Contagious Emulation: Antitheatricity and Theatre as Plague in *Troilus and Cressida*', returns us to an area of symbolic discourse that was topical in Shakespeare's own day: the phenomenon of the plague. Chalk begins with the outburst of an Elizabethan pamphleteer, one William Rankins, against 'the infectious sights of Playes'. Rankins sought to identify the gathering of people to watch plays as being both morally and physically dangerous, and of course, we recall that for several seasons during the height of Shakespeare's career the theatres were indeed closed in the belief that the plague might be physically infectious or contagious between humans. Not surprisingly, then, Chalk identifies the symbolism of plague as a recurrent expression of cultural anxiety, but what may be surprising is to rediscover the pervasiveness of that anxiety as expressed in the text of *Troilus and Cressida*. In an opening section given to 'Plague and its Metaphors', this essay adroitly summarizes both the incidence of the plague and the language within which that plague was encoded in Shakespeare's time: the antitheatrical discourse was couched less in terms of theatre *and* plague than in terms of theatre *as* plague. One of the concerns with the plague was its frightening unpredictability in an age that as yet had no understanding of the means of its transmission. In his next section, 'Houses of Proteus', Chalk sees the perceived transgressions of boundaries between class and gender in the theatre as being symptomatic of the physical and moral mutations imposed by the incidence of the plague upon society at large. In the following section, 'The Plague's the Thing', Chalk draws together in a very

well-documented discussion the explicit connections made between plays and the plague in antitheatrical discourse. In a bridging section, entitled 'Contagion and Undifferentiation', Chalk demonstrates that the language of the pulpit occludes any distinction between plague and playing; just as infected bodies are thrown into an undifferentiating pit, so players create an infected pit in the theatre by flouting traditional sumptuary distinctions; and both forms of 'undifferentiation' are interpreted in terms of visitations of God's wrath. Finally, he brings together the language about the theatre with the language of the theatre in 'The Plaguey Politics of *Troilus and Cressida*'. Giving a fresh reading to a very famous speech, Chalk sees Ulysses' exposition on degree in terms of the tropes of antitheatrical discourse linking plays with the plague. The behaviour of Achilles and Patroclus is accounted in terms of the rhetorical strategies of the antitheatricalists. Chalk presents a fascinating analysis that extends the boundaries of previously perceived irony in *Troilus and Cressida*.

Steve Chinna, who is both a professional theatre practitioner and an academic theorist of theatrical practice, provides a refreshing contribution to Shakespeare studies in the form of his account of his recent production of Howard Barker's play *Gertrude (the Cry)*. Barker's play as a 'palimpsest upon an already extant work' is itself an excursus into the interpretation of *Hamlet*. It has been Barker's practice to offer such palimpsests upon a number of famous works of earlier periods, among them Middleton's *Women Beware Women*, Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya*, and Shakespeare's *King Lear*. As Chinna points out, 'Barker is neither a bardolator nor an iconoclast. He uses Shakespeare's play as a springboard for exploring possibilities — particularly where the possibilities of desire and passion may flourish in a catastrophic world. Barker [...] talks of "honouring" the text in these revisitings and reworkings'. As Chinna indicates, 'What Barker is seeking is a theatre that invites the spectator to speculate — to move beyond the comfort zones of the majority of the forms of cultural representation [...]. Barker's theatre is overtly a theatre of speculation — not a place for learning and instruction. It is a theatre that requires effort, and challenges the spectator'. *Gertrude (the Cry)* was first performed at the Riverside Studios in Hammersmith in 2002 and later in the same year was presented at the International Shakespeare Festival at Helsingør (Elsinore) in Denmark. Barker reconfigures the moral world of Shakespeare's play in a more Nietzschean dimension: 'Both worlds — Barker's and Shakespeare's — are worlds where characters seek to fulfil their desires, whatever the consequences. But Shakespeare's moral world is struggling to find a balance between the scary spaces of secular free will and the sacred order of divine providence. Barker's characters are more elementally, and essentially, Jacobean than that. Their desires drive them,

not the knowledge and fear of possible consequences in the here-and-now, or the hereafter'. Not overtly, but by implication, Chinna suggests, *Gertrude (The Cry)* invites us to reconsider the nature of honesty offered to us in *Hamlet* as a challenge to those who dare to risk.

Few readers of this volume will not be familiar already with the urbane warmth as well as the deep critical sensitivity of Heather Dubrow's writing. In writing about Shakespearean song she brings a poet's understanding to another poet's profound lyricism. Her essay, "'I take pleasure in singing, sir': Towards an Interpretation of Shakespearean Song", is a tribute both to the quality of the songs and equally to the dramatic effectiveness of their placement within the plays in which they occur. With characteristic precision and subtlety she outlines her frame of discussion for this essay: 'my analysis focuses largely on songs that are lyric, not narrative, in mode, but some of its observations apply to both types or to songs' that are not lyrics in most of the usual senses but rather ballads, while others are lyrics in some senses yet distinctively unlyrical in their mood, such as Silence's songs in Act V, scene 3 of *2 Henry IV* or Autolycus's in *The Winter's Tale*. She also counsels against the sort of overdistinction between modes of utterance that would be made all too easy in a conventional Structuralist paradigm: 'Although Jonathan Culler has suggested a binary divide between lyric and the default position of ordinary speech, in fact many intermediary positions insistently present themselves.' Instead of seeking to characterize utterance in absolute terms, she presents an eminently sensible proposal to distinguish by context rather than by formula. What follows is a delightful as well as informative account of ways in which songs work in the plays to which they belong. Song becomes natural and normative, rather than exceptional or disjunctive. She concurs with Diana E. Henderson's comment on *Love's Labour's Lost* and sees it applying to the rest of the canon: 'Shakespeare's play is very much about lyricism as a social act.'

This is an essay that makes too many fine points for one to attempt to summarize them here. What emerges is that in Shakespeare's plays it is often the marginal characters who sing, for without song they would have no voice at all. Ophelia's really mad songs in *Hamlet* and Poor Tom's apparently mad songs in *King Lear* are to similar purpose: they give to persons otherwise so marginalized as to be rendered silent a momentary voice that reaches to the heart of matter so deep as to be inaccessible to the seemingly articulate characters around them. From such instances Dubrow is drawn to ask: 'How, then, does song grant a voice to otherwise marginalized Others? What gives song the power to empower?' Three ways in which song confers unlikely power are then outlined. The first is connected with ritual, which has a quasi-magical potency. In passing, Dubrow mentions that 'many

early modern playwrights were surely aware of the common Neoplatonic links between song and magic'. For a moment one regrets that her focus is elsewhere, for here is a point of great importance: the growth of a new dramatic form, nameable only as *opera*, was at the very time of Shakespeare and his contemporaries in England incorporating the essence of Neoplatonic doctrine into its formative midst; and its presiding spirit, Orpheus, the master of magical alliance between words and music, was already giving his name to the earliest works of Monteverdi and others. The second 'rescripts conversational rules by substituting an alternative discursive register' that creates a sacrosanct performative space within which the marginal speaker is, temporarily at least, inviolable. The third way that empowers the otherwise muted singer is by conferring right of closure: so Puck ends *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with a lyric epilogue beyond the experience of the courtiers, and Feste's concluding song recasts the action of *Twelfth Night* into a dimension of understanding to which his social betters are not privy. Dubrow also brings us to more acute awareness of the varieties of irony afforded by song: what the singer intuitively, what the hearer interprets, and what the audience understands are likely to differ enough to engender ironic distance.

Dubrow identifies in song an 'amalgam of power and powerlessness' that 'invites us to place the songs in drama within the broader context of a linguistic form' that she has 'elsewhere termed "authorizers" — that is, types of speech such as riddles, stories, and prophecies that negotiate power and authority, as well as their often contested relationship'. The remaining portion of her essay is a sustained and brilliantly insightful analysis of the 'Willow' song in terms of Desdemona's role as 'authorizer' and to attempt to summarize it here would be to travesty it. Suffice it to say that the song is seen in terms of its dramatic position in the play, wherein it assumes a centrality that is independent of the singer or its auditors. Dubrow's conclusion, abundantly supported by her argument, is that 'songs and singing typically participate actively in the action and the relationships among characters rather than primarily expressing the emotions of a single personage'. Songs are different from other registers and demand to be seen, heard, and understood on their own terms.

Brett Hirsch's essay in the current volume is a fine instance of his capacity to refresh our understanding of significant issues in early modern drama. 'From Jew to Puritan: The Emblematic Owl in Early English Culture' takes the phenomenon of the owl in emblem and related literatures as a basis for reading marginality against the grain of the more familiar ways in which marginality is encountered and expressed in the early modern period. He begins with an obscure cultural detail: taking a broadside ballad printed early in the Civil War, he points through the

emblem of the owl towards similarities in the ways in which Jews and Roundheads were derided in the opinions of those who enjoyed more established standing. He sets himself the task of exploring 'the transmission of medieval antisemitic textual and visual narratives into early modern England, focusing on the ways in which the bestiary owl was appropriated in charging Catholics with judaizing during the various Reformations, through to its later adaptation as part of the stigmatization of Puritans as Jews in the seventeenth century'.

Hirsch revisits the history of the Jews in England, a topic he has considered more fully elsewhere in his own previous work. He refers to the blood libel, according to which Jews were supposed to have used 'Christian blood for ritual purposes' in the murder of innocent children. This libel was so widespread that regrettably even John Donne subscribed to it in his Christmas Day sermon of 1625. He also addresses 'the iconographic representation of Moses with horns' to demonstrate that a mistaken translation gave the Hebrew *karan* as horned when the word meant that Moses' face was shining after his encounter with the divine: this mistake, combined with an admixture of ill will, was enough to lead some to the conclusion that the horned Moses was 'more like a Devill, than a man'. Allowing for positive reading of the owl as the wise bird identified with Athena or Minerva, Hirsch maintains that 'the owl's classical association with wisdom was literally turned on its head: the once wise owl came to represent folly and false wisdom'. The owl, as a nocturnal bird, became associated with perversity and sin to the point where a large body of negative owl lore came to predominate. The owl's preference for night became part of a religiously charged symbolism, whereby the Jews who obstinately reject Christ remain in the dark of ignorance with the owl as their emblem. The owl, like the mistakenly horned Moses, was ever more closely identified with Jews and their legendary uncleanness. In a painstaking account, many visual and verbal representations of owls from both medieval and early modern sources are adduced by Hirsch in great detail to support his case for the identification of owls with Jews.

During the process of Europe's various reformations through the sixteenth century, there was a marked tendency for each side to view its opponents in apocalyptic terms, which in turn were largely rejecting towards Jews who had not converted to Christianity. For some Protestants, the pope became 'head of the "Synagogue of Satan", a phrase originally found in the Book of Revelation that became a popular epithet in medieval polemics against the Jews'. Consequently, the term 'Romish Synagogue' became coextensive with the 'Synagogue of Satan'. As Hirsch emphatically points out, the name-calling was not part of a simple binary divide: Protestant groups at odds with each other hurled the same apocalyptic

epithets at their antagonists. And through all this, the owl found its unholy way into religious debate. Hence it was that the rise of Puritanism saw the new sects and factions as well as Catholics derided by the more mainstream religionists in terms of Judaic recidivism. Thus it is, as Hirsch ably demonstrates, that in early seventeenth-century literature Puritans, in text and on stage, were pilloried as being owlish Jews. He examines instances from works by many writers of the period — including Shakespeare, Thomas Dekker, and Ben Jonson — to illustrate how pervasive the representation of Puritans as Jewish owls had become; and through his immaculate scholarly process he has given us a detailed account of the provenance of this strange conjunction.

Heather Kerr explores connections of a different kind in her study of *Arden of Faversham*: she draws ‘attention to the drama’s intersections with legal discourses and the inherited Ciceronian topico-rhetorical tradition available to Elizabethan readers in the form of handbooks and related “unofficial” books of instruction’. In her essay, “Romancing the Handbook”: Scenes of Detection in *Arden of Faversham*, she demonstrates that the play is not merely a domestic tragedy at a microcosmic level of society but rather an enlarging look at political and social issues from a much wider view. The figure of Franklin, ‘his name an echo of the analogous social category’, is seen to be something of an everyman figure for his time, and ‘in acting as an agent of criminal discovery, Franklin’s role is typical, rather than anomalous, because the legal system is characterized by local activism of this kind’. She links his role to the practices set out in the legal handbooks available to persons administering justice at the lower levels and maintains that the handbooks, as ‘manuals of rhetoric and “justicing” are vehicles for low-status but nevertheless useful techniques’ and are ‘relevant to the exercise of “practical logic” in the “decentralized, essentially non-bureaucratic” aspect of policing the common peace’. Kerr invites us to put aside our own twenty-first-century familiarity with the protocols of detection and conjecture and to ask ourselves in New Historicist mode, with Lena Cowen Orlin, whether we can see ‘in this early modern dramatic representation of efficient and correct detection’ an example of the play’s ‘participat[ion] in the construction of [its] culture’s ideology’. The essay enquires further into evidential and procedural issues in the play in terms of representation and representations. Numerous homologies are conjectured, including those surrounding absent landlords and/or husbands. Kerr’s analysis points to the complexities as well as the anxieties of a specific cultural context, with particular reference to the central figure of Franklin and in so doing she identifies ways in which the handbooks, read against the genre of domestic tragedy in *Arden of Faversham*, reveal insights into a social condition that may be interpreted both positively and negatively.

In '*Edward II* and the Rhetoricians of Myth', Clayton MacKenzie returns to concerns with which many readers of the early modern period will be familiar through his writings. In his first few pages he recuperates with admirable concision some of the ways in which various medieval and early modern writers mythologized England as an earthly paradise. He suggests that 'Marlowe's play addresses the seminal descriptors of the English paradise, demonstrating how Edward II and the time in which he lived fell so regrettably short of paradisaical expectations'. Thence he argues that the play exposes bogus mythologizers in order to prepare for 'the emergence of the true English mythologizer, Edward III, at the end of the play'. Within the play itself there is a bogus mythologizer in the form of Edward's ill-chosen favourite, Gaveston. Gaveston's selfish and narcissistic nature is revealed as being destructive, and his dangerousness is revealed in the very qualities of the myth he constructs for himself.

Beneath the mythologizing lies the enduring Elizabethan fear of civil war. MacKenzie sees Elizabethan mentality in terms of a neurotic and 'curious composite of fighting spirit and peace-loving inclination' that finds expression in the often conjoined reference to Mars and Pallas Athena. He cites Gerard Leigh's reference in 1583 to an 'anglicized war-god as Pallas's knight' and Peacham's English Mars as being 'tutored by Pallas'. Against this construction of the English ideal, MacKenzie finds that in *Edward II* Gaveston is portrayed by his enemies in terms that see him as being antithetical to the ideal. It is only a short step from denigration of Gaveston to imputations directed at the King himself. Even those too close to Edward or, like Spenser Jr, desiring to become too close participate in the opposition to Edward's self-mythologizing; though, as MacKenzie allows, quite possibly 'Marlowe does not intend us to read his comments as ironic' but as the expression of an 'all-encompassing mythology' available to all. Meanwhile, Edward drifts into 'vacuous, self-centred rant'. MacKenzie takes issue with Claude J. Summers's view that a failure to express a stance compatible with Tudor orthodoxy means that Marlowe is guilty of a 'refusal to moralize history', arguing instead that 'some degree of historical moralizing *is* going on in this play'. Rather, MacKenzie sees the play in terms of competition between a mythology and an antithetical mythology, or antimythology, a conflict that is to be resolved in the accession of Edward III.

Mary-Rose McLaren returns our attention to Shakespeare. In 'Making Men out of Kings: Shakespeare's Sources and Kingship' she questions the frequent assumption that 'Holinshed, Halle, and to a lesser extent, Fabyan, are given credit for providing Shakespeare with his historical sources' and urges us to look more carefully into the social and literary contexts in which Shakespeare was writing 'and not only at immediate and easily identifiable sources'. She then takes us to the various

London chronicles of the fifteenth century and their successors, pointing out that the relationship between these early chronicles and Shakespeare's plays have not been previously examined in detail. It is important to note that Fabyan's chronicle, the last of the great London chronicles, was particularly significant because the influential printer Richard Pynson published it in 1516 and it therefore received wide circulation. Professor McLaren then provides some striking examples: among them is the penance of Dame Eleanor Cobham, which is dramatically realised in *2 Henry VI*, and part of Henry V's well-known speech before the Battle of Agincourt. These examples serve to demonstrate that 'Shakespeare's use of sources was more diverse than is usually acknowledged'. Asking whether it matters, McLaren maintains that familiarity with these chronicles and their preoccupations advances our understanding of the cultural contexts beyond what we gain from reading Holinshed, Halle, and Fabyan.

In particular, McLaren turns to the pertinent question: 'How did London chroniclers see their kings?' The answer, at a basic level, is that they saw them in processional pageants that had many of the attributes of street theatre. Commenting on recurrent themes in this display, she says: 'In these processions there are three central images: pilgrimage, the ideal king, and ordered rule.' As a case in point, she summarizes a strikingly detailed account of the entry of Henry VI into London in 1432, in which 'the whole city does indeed become the stage for the playing out of these ideas in a dramatic fashion'. She adduces instances in *2 Henry IV*, *Richard II*, and *2 Henry VI* in support of her argument for the significance of the London chronicles and the patterns of ideas they encapsulate. Emphasizing the closeness of pageantry to real life for fifteenth-century Londoners, she reaches the thought-provoking conclusion that the pageantry of kingship comes down to Shakespeare's generation as more than a metaphor: 'Shakespeare's kings are actors acting as men acting as kings. The fifteenth-century kings, however, are kings being kings' in a domain that is, in itself, essentially theatrical. Nevertheless, she leaves us with some important distinctions. Among them is that 'Shakespeare's plays are about the process of self-recognition, whereas the London chroniclers are concerned with the process of presentation', and that there is an essential difference between the drama of the open street and the drama of the enclosed space.

Lucy Potter presents an unusual and interesting approach in her essay, 'Informing Audiences: Marlowe's Early Tragedies'. In a comparative study of *Dido, Queen of Carthage* and *1 Tamburlaine*, she argues that diverging rhetorical strategies in these two radically different plays lead to the conclusion that '*1 Tamburlaine* dismantles *Dido*'s aesthetic framework'. At the heart of this difference is a changed perception of catharsis. In *Dido* we are required to share with Aeneas in experiencing the

purgation of those emotions of pity and fear that Aristotle had emphasized. In preparing us to accept Aeneas as the heroic founder of the new nation to replace the destroyed city of Troy, Marlowe's play presents 'a pitiful and fearful Aeneas' in contrast to the pitiless Pyrrhus who embodies the spirit of destruction. Purged not so much by the experience itself as by the narrative that he imparts to the audience, Aeneas achieves the desired end of Aristotle, which is not to perform but to recite the events that have provoked these emotions. Despite the deleterious effects of his narration on the emotions of Dido in the telling of his story, Aeneas himself is prepared for his destined work, which is to found the new city of Rome. Throughout her discussion, Potter debates the extent and manner of relationship between Marlowe's play and Virgil's account of Dido and Aeneas.

If, as Potter proposes, *1 Tamburlaine* represents a complete break with or even reaction against the aesthetic framework of *Dido*, the role of catharsis is again at issue. Beginning with Zenocrate's lament, she finds that here is 'action that re-presents *Dido* elements but departs from the theory behind it'. While Zenocrate may exhibit attributes of the Aristotelian requirement for self-discovery, Tamburlaine himself is as unfeeling as Pyrrhus. She pleads with her husband to find 'fear and feeling of the like distress' to that suffered by his victims, but to no avail. Tamburlaine learns neither from Aristotelian precept nor from the generic envelope of *de casibus* tragedy that he himself inhabits. Sensing an irony in Tamburlaine's perverse denial of *de casibus* presentiments, Potter suggests that 'Marlowe may be mocking himself, distancing himself from the aesthetic that underpins his first play'. She concludes with the intriguing thought that 'the final irony of *2 Tamburlaine* is that Tamburlaine's desire to "glut" himself on Zenocrate's dead body draws the curtain on his violent stage. To put it another way, only when catharsis is dead and about to be digested do the "bloody spectacles" of tragedy end. In terms of *Dido*'s theoretical project, this is a logical conclusion to *1 Tamburlaine*'s dismantling of *Dido*'.

John Tillotson brings a historian's perspective to theatricality in civic life. In 'Private Drama, Public Spectacle: Death and the Pre-Reformation London Elite' he returns us to the proximity between publicly observed religious rituals and secular performance. He quotes with approval the work of Michael Neill on street pageantry, but takes issue with him on the degree to which pre-Reformation observance in relation to funerals and mourning continued into the post-Reformation period of which Neill chiefly speaks. In particular, Tillotson observes that 'the abolition of the doctrine of purgatory totally changed the relationship between the living and the dead' in religious ritual, although 'the rituals of eating and drinking, and the elements of display, whose focus was the living' seem to have remained materially unaltered. He then proceeds to an analysis of 'the drama and religious

rituals of a group of five London funerals during the early years of Henry VIII's reign' as instances and indicators of pre-Reformation practice. These funerals, marking the death of members of the wealthy London elite, were conducted under the scrutiny of the College of Heralds, which 'had come to have a controlling role in staging high-status funerals, as well as other public spectacles like tournaments or the ceremonial entry of monarchs into the City'. In defence of pre-Reformation displays of pomp and wealth in relation to the purgation of the rich dead, Sir Thomas More is seen, in his *Supplication of Souls* (1529), to present a sophisticated justification of funerary rites that were already attracting suspicion and hostility in some sectors of the community. Tillotson's graphic account of five noble funerals gives insight into a state of mind that largely passed away in the post-Reformation period. Belief in Purgatory made the difference: 'Because the dead man's soul continued to need the prayers and masses of the living during its stay in Purgatory, the process of making a good death did not end with burial and the associated dinners for rich and poor.' Prayers and funded charitable observances were provided for years after the death of the deceased person as having a role in alleviating the torments of Purgatory. The essay supports Michael Neill's account of the 'pageant theater of death and mourning', at the same time emphasizing the dramatic role of the liturgy in pre-Reformation England. Tillotson concludes that the seemingly ready decline in funded services and charitable observances for the dead in the 1540s may have had less to do with sudden doctrinal change in itself than with the fact that the cost of such ceremonies and charitable works had become oppressive and that change in itself was found acceptable because a great deal of the ceremonial and display actually survived the religious transition with little change.

The collection concludes appropriately with a reflective essay by Laurence Wright on 'Irony and Transcendence on the Renaissance Stage'. After a résumé on the subject of irony in general, Wright considers elements of dramatic irony. In particular he addresses the issue of transcendence, both at the level of "going beyond" the human to share the perspective of the gods or the afterlife' and also within the 'continuum of structured irony at work on the Renaissance stage, from minutiae of verbal interchange up to grand cosmological suppositions'. He warns against a simple binary pairing of world and stage as opposites, interrogating that distinction with reference to playful but rather laboured evocations by Beaumont and Fletcher and by Massinger. Alongside these instances, he sets an *entr'acte* contrived by Bernini for two audiences, a real one and a fictive one placed on stage, with the two audiences facing each other. Here is 'mirroring without transcendence, irony as *mere* irony'. At what point, Wright inquires, does theatricality become a meaningful metaphor for life?

According to Wright, 'the peculiar task of the stage metaphor, the notion of the theatre as a metaphor for life', involves a complex interaction between rarefied intellectual constructions of life and mundane reality, which is 'to interrogate the tension between this inscrutable cosmic order and the limited viewpoints of ordinary humanity'. To illustrate his argument, he offers an incisive analysis of intellectual pretensions in *The Spanish Tragedy* to demonstrate 'the collapse of the transcendent perspectives Kyd builds into his play' that leaves the audience 'to synthesize a disconcerting epistemological residue of ironies'. Wright then considers Petrarch, Pico, and Vives as forerunners towards the Renaissance sense of self-fashioning that is inextricably bound up with 'a form of acting, of playing a part, challenging old roles and inventing new ones'. Wright's scene then moves to Shakespeare, whom he considers in terms of metatheatrical irony from *3 Henry VI* to *Hamlet* and then to the last plays. To these readings, or rather viewings, he brings the essentially twentieth-century perspectives of Wittgenstein and Hui-zinga. In these plays he finds 'fleeting Platonic forms' that need to be seen in terms of counter-realities, such as that offered by Caliban in his murderous mood and that 'until Caliban, in his complex contemporary forms, is offered and accepts a proper place in the city, our revels will continue to be disrupted'. The metatheatrical interaction between world and stage, Wright concludes, offers ample space for the play of irony; however, mere irony, without transcendence — however configured or understood — diminishes the potential for significant meaning in metatheatrical and metaphorical possibilities.

'BI-FOLD AUTHORITY': THE ELECTRONIC RE-CREATION OF SHAKESPEARE

Michael Best

By-fould authority: where reason can reuolt
Without perdition, and losse assume all reason,
Without reuolt. This is and is not *Cresseid*.

(*Troilus and Cressida*, v. 2. 159–61, 1609 Quarto)

Like Janus (Figure 1), an Internet edition of Shakespeare faces both the past and the future, as it presents works of an earlier age in the most modern of media. My epigraph is similarly looking in two directions. Troilus has just seen Cressida betray his love by giving in, not unwillingly, to Diomedes, and in a brilliant rationalization, convinces himself both that she is in essence still true to him, and at the same time only outwardly false; thus she is and is not Cressida. My question, similarly bidirectional, is whether the Shakespeare in an Internet Shakespeare edition is or is not our contemporary.

In creating a means of publishing Shakespeare to an audience that is by at least an order of magnitude more global than is possible in print, the Internet Shakespeare Editions (ISE) has an opportunity to explore the theoretical opportunities and limits of publication on the Internet and in the electronic medium. Statistics for our site show that in a given day we will receive visits from over thirty countries, many of them non-English-speaking, though our site thus far is almost unilingually

This paper was initially written for a session at the International Shakespeare Association meeting in Brisbane, 2006, devoted to a re-evaluation of the work of Jan Kott; it was subsequently presented in a fuller form at the Perth Medieval and Renaissance Group Symposium. I am grateful to the University of Western Australia for making this possible, and to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for providing funding for the development of the Internet Shakespeare Editions web site.



Figure 1. Emblem 18, *Prudentes*, in Andrea Alciato, *Emblemata* (Padua, 1621). Courtesy of William Barker, University of King's College.

presented in English. That the site attracts so wide an audience seems, at first blush, to provide support for the view, proudly claimed by Ben Jonson but now largely abandoned by scholars, that Shakespeare was 'not for an age, but for all time', a writer who transcended his period, his physical location in England, and even his language. Despite the remarkable multinational demonstration of interest in Shakespeare demonstrated by our site, few scholars today will subscribe to the similarly splendid confidence of Martin Esslin in his Introduction to the 1964 edition of Jan Kott's *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*, when he claims that 'Great works

of art have an autonomous existence, independent of the intention and personality of their creators, and independent also of the circumstances of the time of their creation'.¹ This paper is stimulated by a desire to explore two issues: the significance of the global interest in Shakespeare our site illustrates, and the effect of the electronic medium in its capacity to forge links between two approaches to Shakespeare that are often seen as at odds: textual scholarship and performance.

The Actor

Kott explored the way that contemporary productions of Shakespeare, many of them in Eastern Europe, found ways of expressing through them the political struggles of the time.² His work, profoundly influential in the performance community,

¹ Martin Esslin, Introduction to Jan Kott, *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* (New York: Doubleday, 1964), p. xi.

² Krystyna Kujawska Courtney writes: 'Kott's clear but never explicit political parallels between the twentieth-century totalitarian regimes and the War of the Roses, for example, inspired such theatre directors like Peter Brook, Peter Hall, Michael Bogdanov, Adriane Mnouchkine, Charles Marowitz and Giorgio Strehler to look for ways to fashion productions that highlighted contemporary political situations and that allowed them to interpret Shakespeare's plays as allegories of modern times.' See 'Influence or Irrelevance? Jan Kott and the Multicultural Shakespeare

meshed with the growing influence of Stanislavskian methods on actors and directors to produce the mode of production that William Worthen has argued is now dominant: an approach in which actors feel that they are directly communicating Shakespeare to the audience through their voices and bodies.

The complicity of actor training in ideological formation is nowhere more visible than at this point: 'Shakespeare' becomes a naturalizing metaphor on the order of the body itself, representing the universal, transcendent, and natural in ways that both legitimate and render unquestionable the dominant discourse of the stage.³

Worthen has argued that a version of this universalizing view forms the basis of much of the training that modern actors undertake, and that they accordingly see Shakespeare as creating characters consistent with modern psychological understanding. As I will discuss later, modern critics and textual scholars who differ in just about everything else will agree that Shakespeare's text is far from universal, seeing it as deeply contingent on the culture of the reader and the circumstances of the moment of creation, and unstable both in meaning and in the choices of editors who are expected to create a seamless modern text from what are often unreliable and contradictory early publications.

There is no question that the vitality of Shakespeare's plays, in English and in other languages, persists on stages worldwide. Directors and actors discover relevancies and proclaim them through their choice of staging, costuming, and cuts to the text. Audiences come, and keep coming, not only to the steady release of films and to productions by major companies, but to the myriad of smaller festivals kept alive by the passion of their commitment to plays and to roles they want to recreate. I am going to start by focusing on the forward face of Janus: what Worthen characterizes as the dominant view of the acting community. The ISE's involvement with performance is through our database of Shakespeare in Performance. As well as providing comprehensive information about Shakespeare films from the very first silent films to the present day, we are digitizing representative examples of the minutiae of stage production in order to communicate something of the magic of performance that disappears when the house lights come on: images of prompt books, stage designs, costumes, directors' notes, and so on.

Context', in *Rubrica's Shakespeare Studies: A Collection of Essays*, ed. by Irina S. Prikhod'ko (Moscow: Polygraph-Inform, 2006), pp. 193–208 (p. 207).

³ W. B. Worthen, *Shakespeare and the Authority of Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 99.

Hitherto, those wishing to undertake research into Shakespearean performance have had to find the means to see plays themselves or to visit institutions, like the Theatre Museum in London or the Folger Shakespeare Library, which house records of productions; the only alternative is to work from secondary sources by authors who have had the opportunity to work with the originals, such as the volumes produced in the various series that focus on performance: *Shakespeare in Performance* (Manchester University Press), *Text and Performance* (Macmillan), and *Shakespeare in Production* (Cambridge). The series *Players of Shakespeare*, edited by Philip Brockbank, Russell Jackson, and Robert Smallwood, is rather different in that it records the experiences of actors who have played various roles in mainly Royal Shakespeare Company productions. This engaging series provides considerable insight into the current culture of acting Shakespeare in what is acknowledged to be the foremost theatre company of our day.

Despite the presence of these works on Shakespeare in performance, the fundamental problem remains that there is a paucity of readily available evidence on what actually happens in the theatre. Our mandate is to fill this gap: to compile a representative archive of Shakespeare in performance in many countries — and ultimately in many languages — available to an audience that includes scholars, theatre historians, actors, students, and members of a growing general public with access to the web. In order to do this, we are starting in our own backyard by working with a remarkable group of North American theatres, the Shakespeare Theatre Association of America, collecting and digitizing materials for access by our worldwide audience. We are making available a growing range of interpretations of Shakespeare as performed by companies from the well-established — the festivals at Stratford, Ontario, and Ashland, Oregon — to a representative sample of the dozens of smaller festivals across North America: Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan, in Saskatoon, or the all-female company Judith Shakespeare in New York, for example. One of our major goals in establishing the range of companies represented in the database is to make available information about Shakespeare as performed by what we might call ‘non-canonical’ companies of this kind.

The usefulness of the database will require us to face two major questions: how much information can we gather about productions, and how effectively can those accessing the database use the materials we provide? Our experience in working with theatre professionals suggests that they are keen for their work to be included in the database, so long as it does not require additional work at their end — a wholly reasonable position, since theatres are notoriously overworked and underfunded. More difficult problems are those that deal with intellectual property rights. In most countries, Actors’ Equity or its equivalent imposes strict limits on the kinds

of images of actors that can be published, so that it is often impossible to display production stills; in addition, the photographer, costume designer, and theatre company have rights concerning the display of their work, all of which can make the process of getting permissions dauntingly time-consuming. Reviews of productions take time to find, to digitize, and to get permission to reprint. On the positive side, our assumption — already showing signs of being accurate — is that those who participate in the theatre community become keen to see their work included, once they see the site and what it promises. The further question concerns the difficulty of assessing a production from the kinds of information we are able to digitize, the equivalent of reassembling a living body from fragments of bones. William Worthen's felicitous image, 'a specific performance cannot be extrapolated from text alone, much as a table cannot be extrapolated from a tree', remains apt even when the 'text' is expanded by multimedia images, programme notes, and reviews.⁴

Nonetheless, the database promises to provide both an entry point for further, deeper research and a resource in its own right that will permit broader examination of variation and change in taste across a generous sampling of theatre companies. Purely from the point of view of the statistical number of companies and productions being mounted in different countries, it is interesting to discover that Shakespeare seems to have been performed less in Australia in the last decade, while the number of theatres and performances in Canada and the United States has risen. It seems that in North America the cachet of Shakespeare as a representative of high culture attracts an audience that wants to be both entertained and in some way improved. The many successful outdoor or tent-based festivals certainly attract a family audience rather than the culture-seekers who attend the indoor theatres. Shakespeare as author-function makes respectable the high jinks of the comedies and the violence of the tragedies. In Canada, the prestigious festival at Stratford, Ontario, began in a tent, and many centres across the country carry on the tradition. Irena Makaryk remarks, somewhat less than positively, that 'The hallmark style of these [open-air] productions is similar — enthusiastic rushing about, playing comedy for its outrageousness and slapstick, tragedy for its melodrama'.⁵

⁴ W. B. Worthen, 'The Imprint of Performance', in *Theorizing Practice: Redefining Theatre History*, ed. by W. B. Worthen and Peter Holland (New York: Palgrave, 2003), pp. 213–34 (p. 214).

⁵ Irena Makaryk, 'Shakespeare in Canada: "A World Elsewhere"?' in *Shakespeare Around the Globe*, Internet Shakespeare Editions, University of Victoria (2002) <<http://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/Library/Criticism/shakespearein/canada1.html>> [accessed September 2010]. See especially chap. 6.

She goes on, however, to relate a delightful anecdote where the natural surroundings contributed spectacularly to a production by Bard on the Beach in Vancouver by providing a flash of lightning as Oberon disappeared at the end of a scene from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Although all Australian capital cities — and some major wineries — provide outdoor stages for Shakespeare, the interest of actors, and perhaps of the audience, seems less keen than in North America. Perhaps here Shakespeare is seen as distant in both space and time, a fusty old Pommy not worth the effort of keeping alive on Australian stages.

The steadily increasing collection of digitized images in the database reveals that there are very few productions in North America that dress their actors in Elizabethan garb: the influence of Jan Kott is still strong, and is no doubt reinforced by the need for theatre companies to attract audiences by directing and costuming the plays in such a way that their relevance to current culture is made evident. Accordingly, many productions, like those of the Bell Shakespeare in Australia, are in some version of modern dress. More often, however, our database suggests that the plays are set at a slight remove from the present: the Victorian period, in the earlier part of the twentieth century, or in some eclectic non-period. This compromise gains the advantage of making the plays seem less fusty, but at the same time giving them enough distance that social attitudes — those towards women, for example — will not seem too absurdly out of step with the setting. This kind of choice suggests that directors are well aware that Shakespeare is not wholly our contemporary, after all.

The production of *Romeo and Juliet* shown in Figure 2, produced at my university, set the play in the modern period, but, as the tango here indicates, it was also set in a South American ambience. Again the director chose a setting that both stresses modernity and at the same time — at least to an audience in staunchly Anglo-Saxon Victoria, British Columbia — provides a degree of otherness that makes such plot lines as the macho protection of Juliet by her cousin Tybalt seem comprehensible. The production was staged in 1998, and the director was no doubt influenced in her choice of setting by the well-known Baz Luhrmann film of 1996, *Romeo + Juliet*. This film, set in a composite Mexican or South American location,⁶ wittily confronts its own process of updating the play, with such effects

⁶ See Michel Alfredo Modenessi, '(Un)Doing the Book "without Verona Walls": A View from the Receiving End of Baz Luhrmann's *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet*', in *Spectacular Shakespeare: Critical Theory and Popular Cinema*, ed. by Courtney Lehmann and Lisa S. Starks (London: Associated University Presses, 2002), pp. 62–88 (p. 70); and Barbara Hodgdon, 'William Shakespeare's *Romeo + Juliet*: Everything's Nice in America?', in *Shakespeare and Politics*, ed. by Catherine M. S. Alexander (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 247–62 (p. 250, n. 14).



Figure 2. Tybalt (Jeffrey Fisher) dances with Lady Capulet (Helen Devine). Phoenix Theatre, University of Victoria, British Columbia, 1998. © University of Victoria, Theatre Department/The Phoenix Theatre. Photograph by Don Pierce.

as slam-zooming in on a pistol with the brand name 'rapier' in order to make punning sense of the clash between the play's language and the modernity of the weapons the teenagers are using. Barbara Hodgdon comments on 'the flat effect of American speech (which at best works productively to remind spectators of the play's provenance at the same time as they see it made contemporary)'.⁷ Thus the production grapples with an awareness of distance from the modern viewer, very much like directors who set a play in the Victorian period.⁸

Where a performance is set in a very familiar, modern setting, the director will clearly face some difficulties in resolving the clash between language and setting. Michael Almereyda's film of *Hamlet*, set in modern Manhattan, deals stylishly, even wittily, with many of the problems of modernization. Almereyda sets the 'To be or not to be' soliloquy in a video store, as Ethan Hawke paces aisles where the only genre to be seen is that of the 'Action' movie. The final duel is less successful as modern fencing rules and technology do their best to make sense of the action and language. The moment where Hamlet has the opportunity to kill Claudius at prayer, with its very Renaissance references to Heaven and Hell, is simply glossed over. This Hamlet, driving Claudius in his limousine, pauses while the car is stopped, draws his gun, and trains it on his uncle, who is couched in the back seat in a crisis to which only the film viewer is privy; Hamlet waits, chooses not to pull the trigger, changes his mind, and leaves the vehicle abruptly. We are given no dialogue of any kind that explains his action. The knowledgeable viewer will fill in the blank with Shakespeare's words, but the viewer unfamiliar with the text can only see a seemingly unmotivated, unexplained failure to act.

In the analysis of such moments as these, film has the decided advantage over stage productions of being inscribed in a more permanent medium than the air between stage and audience, so it is possible to move in slow motion between frames to see what exactly is going on. The success of web sites such as YouTube (<http://www.youtube.com/>) illustrates the ease with which the electronic medium can transmit video; it is now trivial to illustrate a text with a link to a video clip. The ISE database includes detailed information about the impressive number of films made from Shakespeare's plays,⁹ but unfortunately, copyright is so rigorously

⁷ Hodgdon, 'William Shakespeare's *Romeo + Juliet*', p. 250.

⁸ Predictably enough, the film evoked scorn from reviewers who expected something more reverent, less nineties MTV. For some reactions, see Crystal Downing, 'Misshapen Chaos of Well-Seeming Form: Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet*', *Literature/Film Quarterly*, 28 (2000), 125–31 (esp. p. 125).

⁹ The database currently lists 755 film and video performances of Shakespeare. Entries include all that is known about direction, setting, and casting, with the addition of a commentary by the

maintained by the major film companies that it is dauntingly difficult to obtain permission to include even snippets from a film as illustrations of a moment in an electronic text. Of course, there are images from this, and many other films, to be found on the web, but our policy is to adhere strictly to all copyright requirements.

If Luhrmann is knowingly arch in his playing with the tension between language and cultural attitudes of an earlier time and our own, the influence of *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* can perhaps more innocently be seen in the 1969 film of *Romeo and Juliet* directed by Franco Zeffirelli. Although traditional Shakespeareans could take comfort from the sumptuous Renaissance Italian costumes and setting, the teenage violence in the movie, the choice of very young stars, their overt sexuality, and other directorial choices make the film very much a product of the sixties. The historian of performance will find that the contrast between Luhrmann and Zeffirelli, rather than demonstrating that Shakespeare is universal, shows clearly the way that his work acts as a prism through which we see the varied colours of different periods and their preoccupations.¹⁰ As Jan Kott himself shows in his discussion of the operatic tradition associated with nineteenth-century performances of *Othello*, a whole discipline of Shakespeare studies explores this fascinating dual phenomenon: production illuminates the received text by demonstrating how the language unpacks into action and inflection at the same time that it reveals the politics, the predilections, and the fashions of the period in which the production takes place.

Other directors have made many of the same kinds of accommodations as Luhrmann and Zeffirelli as they have created a quite remarkable number of big-budget Shakespeare films in the last two decades. I need not stress the way that performances of the plays modestly or radically update the language. Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet* cuts over a third of the original dialogue, and even the most conscientious modern stage productions cut the text. Some degree of cutting, however, is almost certainly something that happened in the first performances of the play

editors. Most of the information has been generously made available to the ISE by Kenneth Rothwell and is based on his *Shakespeare on Screen: An International Filmography and Videography* (New York: Neal-Schuman, 1990).

¹⁰ For a discussion of the Luhrmann film that explores the contrasts between it and Zeffirelli's version with some insight, see Lucy Hamilton, 'Baz vs the Bardolaters: Or, Why William Shakespeare's *Romeo + Juliet* Deserves Another Look', *Literature/Film Quarterly*, 28 (2000), 118–24. The same can be said, of course, of other films that have been remade over time: Olivier's and Branagh's versions of *Henry V*, for example, or the multiple versions of *Hamlet* now available as videos.

— as Lukas Erne persuasively argues in his recent work, *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist*.¹¹ It is ironic that Kenneth Branagh's 'uncut' four-hour *Hamlet* forced a version of the play on a modern filmgoer that the original audience never had to experience, since his *Hamlet* uses a 'full text' that conflates passages from the second Quarto with the Folio;¹² he too creates a semi-distance from the present by setting a Victorian *Hamlet* in the baroque splendour of Blenheim Palace, a 'period setting that attempts to set the story in a historical context that is resonant for a modern audience but allows a heightened language to sit comfortably'.¹³

The recent film of the *Merchant of Venice*, directed by Michael Radford and starring Al Pacino, chooses to set the action in the Renaissance, apparently to distance the attitudes to Jews expressed in the play from those of our own time, as the opening sequence makes carefully clear: while we watch the gate of the ghetto being locked, and crowd scenes where 'usurer' is being shouted, a Jew is thrown into the canal, and Antonio spits on Shylock, we are given a short history lesson as antique writing scrolls across the screen:

Intolerance of the Jews was a fact of 16th Century life even in Venice, the most powerful and liberal city state in Europe. [...] The Jews were forbidden to own property. So they practiced usury, the lending of money at interest. This was against Christian law. The sophisticated Venetians would turn a blind eye to it; but for the religious fanatics, who hated the Jews, it was another matter.

Drew Daniel comments astutely that the whole non-Shakespearean opening sequence shows the film to be 'not so much spoiling for a fight as flinching in anticipation of one'.¹⁴ This *Merchant*, paradoxically, is at its most modern as it stresses the distance between Shakespeare's text and modern attitudes: the message seems to be 'Of course, *we* wouldn't be like Antonio and the rest of those awful, prostitute-enamoured Venetian Renaissance types'. And in the film's rescue of Jessica — where at the end we see on her finger a closeup of that crucial ring she was alleged to have given away for a monkey — our modern sensibilities are soothed, the production (and perhaps Shakespeare) similarly rescued from the

¹¹ Lukas Erne, *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

¹² Kenneth Branagh, William Shakespeare, and Russell Jackson, *Hamlet: Screenplay, Introduction and Film Diary* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1996), p. 175. Branagh does admit that 'arguments will always rage about exactly what constitutes a "full text"' (p. vi).

¹³ Branagh, Shakespeare, and Jackson, *Hamlet: Screenplay, Introduction and Film Diary*, p. vii.

¹⁴ Drew Daniel, 'William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*', *Film Quarterly*, 60 (2006), 52–56 (p. 52).

charge of anti-Semitism.¹⁵ Pacino's very modern method-influenced acting in this film fits well with Shylock's generally literal and prosaic language, but there is an odd moment in the climax of the trial scene where Shylock is shown on his knees, suppressing a deep groan as he learns that he is to be forced to convert to Christianity; the very English accent of Anton Rogers as the Duke reminds us of the essential foreignness of Shakespeare's language as he enunciates off-screen the conscientiously scanned lines, 'He shall do this, or I do recant | The pardon that I late pronouncèd here' (IV. 1. 388–89).

I have been suggesting that, though their mission is to perform Shakespeare in a way that announces its relevance to a modern audience, directors and actors of Shakespeare are acutely aware of the non-contemporary nature of at least some of the material with which they work. Jonathan Holmes has recently argued that actors are far from naïve commentators in the field of Shakespeare studies, not limited to a single or simple approach either to the plays or to performance. Holmes shows that actors frequently study the tradition of performance in a given part: 'Reading the actors talking of Richard III and Shylock, it has become clear that their acts of interpretation and mimesis are based as much on those of their precursors in the parts as they are on the text.'¹⁶ Holmes responds to William Worthen's thesis — that actors are overwhelmingly guided by modern Stanislavskian techniques that focus on character — by demonstrating that Worthen's position is supported almost exclusively by reference to interviews in the *Players of Shakespeare* series, and that even within this resource he selectively quotes from the actors in order to make his point that the acting community habitually ignores historicity in their interpretation of Shakespeare.¹⁷ Holmes points out especially that actors research the approaches of earlier actors, keenly aware of theatre traditions that are passed on over the generations. Even though actors and directors assume the face of Janus that looks to present tastes and predilections,

¹⁵ Daniel makes a similar point about this rewriting of the play ('William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*', p. 56); since, however, it was Tubal who passed on the apparently false information about the ring, the subtext may not wholly remove the aura of anti-Semitism from the episode.

¹⁶ Jonathan Holmes, *Merely Players? Actors' Accounts of Performing Shakespeare* (New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 54.

¹⁷ In fairness I should qualify Holmes's view by pointing to Worthen's extensive discussion of the views of directors, who tend to leave more evidence of their craft than actors. Holmes does discuss a far wider range of actors and their interest in historicizing, however, drawing on three centuries' worth of actors' written reflections on playing Shakespeare.

there is a vivid sense of the way the plays are foreign and need translation for a modern audience.

Some in the acting community are exploring a different way of bridging the gap between the present and the past by re-creating original practices in the theatre. The New Globe in London is the most visible of these experiments, but a similar approach is being taken by other companies, like Patrick Tucker's London's Original Shakespeare Company and the Atlanta Shakespeare Company at the New American Shakespearean Tavern.¹⁸ Research activities at Shakespeare's Globe provide 'a forum for scholars and practitioners to advance the knowledge of the original conditions of Shakespearean performance [and] investigate and explore Shakespearean stagecraft and Elizabethan playhouse practice'.¹⁹ The physical structure of Shakespeare's Globe could in many ways be seen as very much a parallel with my use of Janus as a figure for a number of intersecting activities in Shakespeare studies, as one moves from the modern, climate-controlled foyer to the playhouse itself, which painstakingly employed original building materials and processes. The audiences figure the same kind of combination, as modern polyglot tourists take on the role of groundlings, evoking strikingly familiar scorn from established theatre reviewers.²⁰

A recent production of *Troilus and Cressida* at the Globe (1995) went further by featuring the actors speaking in a reconstruction of original pronunciation; the experience was a mixed one, as the resulting dialect was sufficiently obscure to a modern ear that audience members forewarned came armed with copies of the text so that they could follow the action — providing, in effect, their own subtitles. John Lahr, reviewing the production in the *New Yorker*, commented: 'By my estimate, only about thirty per cent of the production, which is unamplified, is comprehensible; the waves of words produce a mesmerizing static, sort of like listening to poetry underwater.'²¹ Imperfect though they may be, these attempts by directors

¹⁸ The Atlanta Shakespeare Company is 'an original practices company performing a minimum of eleven plays a year in addition to offering comprehensive educational programs and professional actor training programs'. Company history from the web site of the Shakespeare Theatre Association of America, <<http://www.staaonline.org/>> [accessed 3 February 2007].

¹⁹ Worthen discusses 'Globe Performativity' in his *Shakespeare and the Force of Modern Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 79–116.

²⁰ See Paul Prescott, 'Inheriting the Globe: The Reception of Shakespearean Space and Audience in Contemporary Reviewing', in *Companion to Shakespeare and Performance*, ed. by Barbara Hodgson and W. B. Worthen (Malden: Blackwell, 2005), pp. 359–75.

²¹ John Lahr, 'Talking the Talk: The Globe Goes Elizabethan', *New Yorker*, 19 September 2005.

and actors to return to original practices complicate the image of a performance community, still under the spell of Kott's influence, looking exclusively to the present. In due course, this movement may have an effect on the theatre similar to the movement in the study of early music that has taught us much about early instruments and early performance practices.²²

A further illustration of the concern of actors and directors to work with the difference of Shakespeare's language from our own is the return of so many directors and actors to the First Folio. The problem for textual scholars is that some of the assumptions behind this otherwise admirable concern for the originals are unsubstantiated. The most extreme form of this near-fetishizing of the Folio — most recently argued by Patrick Tucker, *Secrets of Acting Shakespeare: The Original Approach* — argues that punctuation and capitalization reflect Shakespeare's directions to the actor, instructing them on emphasis and inflection, such that Shakespeare is felt to be directing from beyond the grave.²³ In contradiction to this reassuring belief, textual scholars will insist with some emphasis — even passion — that all the available evidence from play manuscripts of the period shows that authors used scarcely any punctuation at all. Punctuation and capitalization were added by the scribe or compositor — far less impressive figures to be directing from beyond the grave. Tucker's experiments in reproducing original conditions require the actors to use 'parts', limited to their own speeches and a short cue; the parts are generated from the Folio text, retaining original punctuation and capitalization. On the surface, this seems an admirable search for authenticity; Anthony Dawson has pointed out, however, that there is an important contradiction here, since all available evidence shows that 'the "parts" show quite different orthographic and punctuation features from printed texts'.²⁴

²² But see the collection edited by Nicholas Kenyon for a discussion of the limitations of the historical reconstruction of early performances: *Authenticity and Early Music: A Symposium* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

²³ Patrick Tucker, *Secrets of Acting Shakespeare: The Original Approach* (New York: Routledge, 2002). See also Neil Freeman's *Applause* editions of the plays.

²⁴ Anthony B. Dawson, 'The Imaginary Text, or the Curse of the Folio', in *Companion to Shakespeare and Performance*, ed. by Hodgdon and Worthen, pp. 139–61 (p. 152). See also Worthen's extensive discussion of the problematic use of the Folio advocated by Neil Freeman in *Shakespeare and the Authority of Performance*, pp. 120–25.

The Scholar

Dawson's inconveniently accurate scholarship is one example where textual scholars and performance critics may be taken to represent the backward face of Janus — the scholarly approach to Shakespeare that insists on contextualizing the plays in the foreign context of the Renaissance, and on stressing their difference from our own time.²⁵ Michael Warren, Gary Taylor, and others have cogently argued against the ideal of a single imagined authorial text.²⁶ In a complementary critical movement, the editors of the Oxford Shakespeare replaced the ideal authorial text with an ideal theatrical text;²⁷ one generally admirable result of this change of emphasis is that they have contributed to a general movement to rescue the shorter, often untidier quartos from the moral obloquy of their earlier sobriquet, 'bad' quartos. The current generation of editors is working under the long shadow cast by these scholars, and by the brilliant work of textual scholars like Randall McLeod, Paul Werstine, and others, as they have peeled off the onion layers of interpretation added by the tradition of editors in the process Leah Marcus has so felicitously called 'unediting'.²⁸

²⁵ The current debate on 'presentism' is pursuing a similar divide between those who believe that it is possible to read Shakespeare in a fully historical context and those who argue that all readers are limited by present social and political conditioning, such that a reconstruction of an original point of view is ultimately impossible. See, for example, Ewan Fernie, 'Shakespeare and the Prospect of Presentism', *Shakespeare Survey*, 58 (2005), 169–84; *Shakespeare and Modernity: Early Modern to Millennium*, ed. by Hugh Grady (New York: Routledge, 2000); Terence Hawkes, *Shakespeare in the Present* (London: Routledge, 2002); and *Presentist Shakespeares*, ed. by Ewan Fernie and Terence Hawkes (London: Routledge, 2007). There has also been extensive discussion on the *Shaksper* listserv of the issue, 'Roundtable: Presentism', 2007, available online at <<http://www.shaksper.net/>> [accessed September 2010].

²⁶ Gary Taylor, 'The War in *King Lear*', *Shakespeare Survey*, 33 (1980), 27–34; Michael Warren, 'Quarto and Folio *King Lear* and the Interpretation of Albany and Edgar', in *Shakespeare: Pattern of Excelling Nature*, ed. by David Bevington and Jay Halio (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1978), pp. 95–107. See also the monumental collection, *The Division of the Kingdoms: Shakespeare's Two Versions of King Lear*, ed. by Gary Taylor and Michael Warren (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983).

²⁷ William Shakespeare, *Complete Works*, ed. by Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986). See also the companion volume: Stanley Wells and others, *William Shakespeare: A Textual Companion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986).

²⁸ Representative examples include Randall McLeod [Random Cloud], 'The Marriage of Good and Bad Quartos', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 33 (1982), 421–31; Leah S. Marcus, *Unediting the Renaissance: Shakespeare, Marlowe, Milton* (New York: Routledge, 1997); Paul Werstine,

As a result of the re-evaluation stimulated by these debates, recent textual scholarship has tended to insist on a process of de-conflation; where variants produce texts that are sufficiently different, they should be treated as separate works; *King Lear* is now more likely to be printed in separate Quarto and Folio editions, and the recent Arden *Hamlet*²⁹ publishes the three early texts in a two-volume edition, thus attempting to provide a text of *Hamlet* that both refuses to choose between difficult variants and at the same time preserves the integrity of each text. I would argue, however, that because of the exigencies of print (and its associated cost) the Arden *Hamlet* does not fully succeed in its aims, largely because of the inadequacy of the print 'interface'. Each text is edited in its own right, but (understandably) commentary is not repeated where texts contain the same language. The net result of the edition is to privilege a *Hamlet* reduced to the Second Quarto, the only text with full commentary. The Folio text, relegated to the second volume, is sparsely annotated. The editors have provided no visual signals to show which passages are unique to each version, so it takes a very alert reader to notice where the Folio adds or removes passages. For a reader interested in the whole of the text Shakespeare generated for the various *Hamlets* — surely a legitimate critical concern even in a climate that values de-conflation — there is no easy way to disentangle the variations. There is thus enshrined a hierarchy of *Hamlets*, with the aristocrat the noble Q2, and the underlings the Folio and Q1, the latter given a perhaps surprising boost with fuller commentary than the Folio, simply because it is more different from Q2. The Arden *Hamlet* is an outstanding work of scholarship, but after all the discussion, the commentary, and the additional paper required in a two-volume edition, the result serves as much to illustrate the limitations of print editions as to add to our understanding of the play. If this argument begins to sound like a plea for re-conflation, I take some comfort from Dawson's movement in this direction, when he writes of the way the 'new textualists downplay the process of transmission (which inevitably leads back, however tentatively, to the brain of the author) in favour of a concentration on the isolated and self-contained material object/text'.³⁰

'Narratives about Printed Shakespeare Texts: "Foul Papers" and "Bad" Quartos', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 41 (1990), 65–86; and, more recently, *Institutions of the Text*, ed. by Jeffrey Masten and Wendy Wall (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2001).

²⁹ William Shakespeare, *Hamlet: The Texts of 1603 and 1623*, ed. by Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2006).

³⁰ Dawson, 'Imaginary Text', pp. 151–52.

Except for the relatively advanced scholar, interested in decoding the runically encrypted collation at the bottom of the page of an Arden or Variorum edition, print creates a largely contemporary Shakespeare. The spelling is modern, the typography is contemporary, and the footnotes reassuringly paraphrase and interpret the language. A web edition of the plays will seem even more to belong to the present when a page is downloaded to a screen that a moment ago had been used for a computer game, and where mouse-clicks replace the turning of a page. Thus the modern text on the screen is tidied up and made contemporary in very much the same way as a modern print edition. A major difference, however, from a print edition is that the electronic text can be structured in such a way that it is a simple matter to switch immediately from the modern text to the equivalent scene in any of the early versions. The e-text provides a continual reminder of the editorial process, and as it does so, it defamiliarizes the modern-dress text we have come to accept. Because the Internet Shakespeare Edition integrates old-spelling transcriptions and facsimiles of Folio and Quartos into the experience of reading and interacting with the plays, the strangeness to a modern eye of early modern typography and spelling is made visible to the casual Googler as well as to the dedicated scholar.

When it comes to decisions concerning individual variants, de-conflation provides only occasional comfort. Separate editions of Quarto and Folio *Othello* would solve a famous crux in Othello's final speech, where he berates himself for throwing away a pearl richer than all his tribe. The question is whether he identifies himself with a tribe that is, in the words of the Quarto, 'Indian' or, in the language of the Folio, 'Iudean'. The problem here is not so much that the text is unstable, but that it provides alternative avenues of rich intertextuality, as we are invited to see Othello aligning himself with racial 'others' that evoke fascinatingly different resonances: the image becomes a kind of hypertext link that connects either to the experience of the colonized — the Indian — or to the perception of Jewishness in a Christian world — the Judean. The variant may be the result of a simple mistake, a turned letter, but it is clear that any choice at all by the editor of a single-text *Othello* will reduce the richness of the text. Creating two texts (not as easy to justify as multiple-text *Lears* or *Hamlets*) will, if anything, obscure the richness of the alternative readings, since only the preinformed scholar is likely to notice the difference in reading either text — unless the editors incorporate the critical apparatus of a conflated edition and resort to noting variant readings in collations.

Even the multiple-text Arden *Hamlet* fails to provide a convincing solution to another famous crux: whether Hamlet's flesh is too too solid or sullied. The Folio text is straightforward enough, since the text was emended, corrected, or corrupted to read 'solid'; Q2 (and Q1, interestingly) remain stubbornly intractable in their

reading 'sallied'. Modernization requires that the editor create an emendation of some kind, so de-conflation provides no solution. The Arden editors choose 'sullied', reasonably enough, but the alert reader will need to dig into the commentary to be aware of the alternative. I have elsewhere discussed a related problem in *Macbeth*, where the need to modernize the ambiguous epithet used to describe the witches — 'weyard' — inevitably produces a shrinking of the 'semantic field' of meaning encapsulated in the original, which can be taken to intimate both 'wayward' and 'weird' (in the older sense of 'fated').³¹ As with Hamlet's 'sallied', the editor is faced not with a variant, but with a decision on how to modernize — a decision repeated continuously in smaller ways with each modification of the original punctuation. Some years ago I suggested a solution to the representation of this crux, with tongue partially in cheek, as I proposed that the electronic edition could animate the text, such that the on-screen version moved continuously from the original spelling to the two alternative modernizations.³² In a more sober frame of mind, I am inclined to believe that the further effect of the change in meaning of 'weird' to simply 'strange' seems an insuperable challenge for a simple representation on page or screen, and that the best solution in this case might be to retain the original spelling, encouraging the puzzled reader to explore the commentary with its explanation of the alternatives.

What I am suggesting seems counterintuitive, since the main objective of a modern-spelling edition is to facilitate the reader's access to the text — to create the equivalent of a modern-dress performance of the language. My suggestion highlights the paradox that the scholar, committed to the backward-looking view of Janus, is caught in precisely the same paradox as the actor: the need to translate to a modern audience the substance of a language that has changed. The example from *Macbeth* illustrates the awkward fact that even those plays which survive in a single exemplar in the Folio provide puzzles for both print and screen editions. In this case, I am arguing that the oddity of a word like 'weyard' will encourage exploration of the semantic field of meaning; less amenable to this kind of approach are those words that look perfectly normal, but which hide a puzzle behind an innocent face. I am reminded of the fundamental failure of the computer's spell-checker to warn me when I type (as I often do) 'form' instead of 'from'. One example, from many I could choose, will illustrate the problem, and will illustrate

³¹ See also the discussion of this issue in Margreta de Grazia and Peter Stallybrass, 'The Materiality of the Shakespearean Text', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 44 (1993), 255–83.

³² See Michael Best, 'Standing in Rich Place: Electrifying the Multiple-Text Edition; Or, Every Text Is Multiple', *College Literature*, special issue, 36.1 (Winter 2008), 26–39.

the way that modern electronic resources can provide the editor with more information to make the inevitable decisions that must be made in any medium. In *King John*, the King of France is challenged by King John to declare what authority he has in challenging John's right to the throne. The passage reads thus in the Folio:

K. IOHN. From whom hast thou this great commission
To draw my answer from thy Articles?

FRANCE. Frō that supernal Iudge that stirs good thoughts
In any beast of strong authoritie,
To looke into the blots and staines of right. (ISE transcript, TLN 407–11)

The reading 'In any breast', rather than 'beast', was adopted as soon as the Second Folio. There is no doubt that 'beast' makes a kind of sense, and a conservative editor will choose to leave it, explaining the alternative in a note, as E. A. J. Honigmann does in his Arden edition of 1954.³³ Modern electronic resources, however, allow the editor to explore far more precisely and widely word usage from the period, and to make more informed choices in cases like these. The association between 'stir', 'feelings', and 'breast' occurs elsewhere several times in the period, as a search of the Literature Online database demonstrates, while a search for 'stirs' (or 'stirres' or 'stir' or 'stirre') NEAR 'beast' (or 'beaste') discovers only this instance in *King John*, and one other poem where the words are indeed near each other, but in different sentences. Of course, it can be argued that Shakespeare's originality makes it possible that his formulation may be an unusual one, so it remains an editorial decision whether the association between 'stir' and 'beast' resonates in a way that justifies retaining the Folio reading. In an online edition it becomes more justifiable to make the emendation to 'breast', since the Folio text can be accessed from a pop-up menu on the same page as the modern reading, as well as from a link in the annotation to the passage.

In any case, the accessibility of the originals makes the editor's choices more transparent and, with appropriate visual signals on the screen, more obvious. The e-text makes it possible to look under the surface of the modern text at the texts lying behind it, peeling layers off until we reach a facsimile of the original physical book or books. Thus far, this kind of unediting is familiar to scholars, though well beyond the capacity of a single print edition. However, the online text can be constructed in such a way that an advanced view shows, by different colour backgrounds, which readings were editorial (or in a multitext work, which were taken from editions other than the copy text). The reader will then be able visually to

³³ William Shakespeare, *King John*, ed. by E. A. J. Honigmann, Arden, 2 (London: Methuen, 1954).

'unedit' the text, as the electronic medium allows us to reinsert the seams into what otherwise is the deceptively smoothly woven modern text to which we are accustomed. As the possibility of switching on and off a display that highlights variant readings illustrates, the e-text can do more than simply provide a larger and more convenient library of interrelated texts. In the next section of this paper, I want to peel away some of the technical layers that lie behind the screen display, to illustrate new directions the electronic text is taking.

The key to understanding the additional information included in an electronic text is the concept of tagging. Readers familiar with HTML, the language that web browsers interpret in order to display information, will understand the basic concept: embedded in the text are a series of instructions — metadata — hidden from the viewer. Less e-literate readers will perhaps be unaware that print editions of plays include this kind of metadata in forms that have become transparent to the reader: we recognize a stage direction by its italic font, and often by its alignment on the page, for example. The actual display of a web page, following its print counterpart, will look similar but will contain hidden additional information ready for the computer to interpret, most powerfully in targeted searches. Before the advent of electronic text, it took many hours of work for a scholar painstakingly to create a concordance of a play, but it is now a matter of a few seconds for the computer to perform the same task. And here is where the problem of distinguishing different kinds of text from one another through metadata becomes important, for without it, the concordance the computer generates will cheerfully include extraneous words like speech prefixes and stage directions, making no distinction between them.

The tagging system developed for the ISE, and shared by many other Humanities projects, embeds the information that a particular passage is a stage direction or a speech prefix; thus a resulting concordance will be an intelligent one. A concordance is effectively a different way of looking at a given text, vertically, perhaps, rather than in a horizontal narrative. With the right software, it becomes possible to read the text in a variety of ways, searching on the speeches of individual characters, for example, or creating queries that show how word usage is distributed throughout the play. Just what these ways of reading the text may reveal will depend on the ingenuity and insight of the critic composing the queries as much as the software, but the important thing in the design of the electronic edition is that it should contain as much metadata as is reasonably possible. For this reason, the encoded text of the old-spelling transcriptions includes information about both the conceptual structure of the play (act, scene, line) and its physical structure as originally published (pages, signatures, blank lines, columns, and so on). Throughout the

editions the Through Line Number (TLN), as recorded in the Norton facsimile of the First Folio, is the standard point of reference, since line numbers vary so much in different editions. An example will illustrate how the metadata is included in the text. The letters enclosed in braces are an indication of early modern type-forms (ligatures and the long 's'); stage directions are categorized to facilitate searching, and for the same reason each speaker's normalized name is recorded so that the computer can limit a search to a given character.

```
<ACT n='3'>
<SCENE n='1'>
<RULE/>
<L></L>
<TLN n='980'><LD><C><I> A{ct}us Tertius. Scena Prima</I>.</C></LD>
<L></L>
<RULE/>
<L></L>
<TLN n='981'><SD t='entrance'><C> <I>Enter Banquo</I>.</C></SD>
<TLN n='982'><S><SP norm='Banquo'><I>Banq</I>.</SP> Thou ha{{s}t} it now,
King, Cawdor, Glamis, all,
<TLN n='983'>As the weyard Women promis'd, and I feare
<TLN n='984'>Thou playd'{{s}t} mo{{s}t} fowly for't: yet it was {s}aide
<TLN n='985'>It {{s}h}ould not {{s}t}and in thy Po{{s}t}erity,
<TLN n='986'>But that my {s}elfe {{s}h}ould be the Roote, and Father
<TLN n='987'>Of many Kings. If there come truth from them,
<TLN n='988'>As vpon thee <I>Macbeth</I>, their Speeches
{{s}h}ine,
<TLN n='989'>Why by the verities on thee made good,
<TLN n='990'>May they not be my Oracles as well,
<TLN n='991'>And {s}et me vp in hope. But hu{{s}h}, no more.</S> <L></L>
<TLN n='992'><C><SD t='sound'><I>Senit {s}ounded</I>.</SD>
<SD t='entrance'><I>Enter Macbeth as King, Lady Lenox</I>,
<TLN n='993'><I>Ro{{s}t}e, Lords, and Attendants</I>.</SD></C>34
```

A reader unused to this kind of text will find it at least as intimidating as the 'barbed wire' collation at the bottom of an Arden text; the difference is that the visitor to the site never sees it, viewing instead the various instantiations it is capable of producing — page views, scene views, the whole play, or various vertical views of which the concordance is the most familiar.

³⁴ Tags are indicated in upper case to make the text easier to read, though standard XML uses lowercase. The tag <LD> indicates a 'literary direction', <S> a speech, and <C> centre-aligned text.

The complexity of early modern texts is such, however, that some degree of simplification is necessary. An early decision was to normalize word spacing in accordance with modern usage — compositors often used punctuation as a word separator, especially in justified text. This choice simplifies computer word-searches, and saves our editors many hours of poring over the originals and doing their best to re-create their varieties of word spacing; at the same time, however, some information in the original is inevitably lost. Jennifer Forsyth, editor of *Cymbeline* for the ISE, comments in her textual introduction that '[Compositor] E invariably sets the semicolon immediately after the preceding word, whereas B prefers to set an intermediate space. On the pages accorded to E, nearly forty occasions confirm his preference (with the exception of a semicolon in a prose line at 966 where the space probably marks his attempt to justify the line)'.³⁵

Unfortunately, this information is lost in the ISE transcriptions, which omit added spaces before punctuation in the process of normalizing. It is the nature of the electronic text, however, that it is always available for correction and improvement; a future scholar may choose to update the texts by adding this detail.

As ISE editors painstakingly prepare modern-dress texts for the Internet reader, they are, despite themselves, identifying with the forward-looking face of Janus. At the same time, because the transcriptions they also edit record not only old spelling, but older type-forms, these texts, unique in form to the computer and the most modern of media, paradoxically provide a way of being increasingly faithful to the past. In my exploration of Shakespeare in performance, I suggested that the effort to make Shakespeare relevant and contemporaneous paradoxically illustrates at least as much about the period when the production took place; there is perhaps a similar paradox in the way that the very contemporary medium of the electronic text is able to defamiliarize Shakespeare and to make more evident the distance his text is from our own experience. Perhaps we can sidestep the whole contested issue of the universality of Shakespeare by claiming rather that his texts provide a richness of narrative, action, and language that has proven almost infinitely adaptable to changing cultures and insights. It is clear from the enormous popularity of our site, receiving over thirty thousand requests for pages per day, that the still-new technologies of the electronic text and the web are capable of bringing a fresh contemporaneity to Shakespeare's texts.

In this paper, I have used the figure of Janus as a symbol of the divided loyalties of both performers and textual critics, as a step towards both describing and

³⁵ See <<http://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/Library/Texts/Cym/intro/TextIntro/default/>> [accessed September 2010].

resolving what Worthen characterizes accurately as ‘the enervating polarization of “text against performance”’.³⁶ As an iconographical figure, Janus is especially helpful here; to the emblem-writers who commented on this image he was not a negative image of the behaviour we would today call ‘two-faced’, but ‘Prudentes’, a symbol of wisdom and prudence as he looked all around himself, both forward and behind.³⁷ I hope that I can avoid the brilliant teenage rationalization of Troilus, when he claims of his fickle lover that ‘this is, and is not, Cressid’, but I do argue that the technology of the web makes it possible to look to both the past and the present, and to claim that Shakespeare both is and is not our contemporary.

³⁶ Worthen, *Shakespeare and the Authority of Performance*, p. 190. In his later work, *Shakespeare and the Force of Modern Performance*, Worthen returns to this polarization, pessimistically commenting, ‘Dramatic performativity today occupies a typically modern disjunction between texts and performances’ (p. 65).

³⁷ Alciato’s Emblem 18 figures Janus and provides this commentary: ‘Two-faced Janus, you who know the things that have already passed and the things to come, and who can see the grimaces behind you just as well as those before, why do they fashion you with so many eyes and why so many faces? Is it because your image teaches men to have kept an eye open all around them?’ Quoted, with permission, from Alciato, *Book of Emblems: The Memorial Web Edition in Latin and English*, ed. by William Barker, Mark Feltham, and Jean Guthrie, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 26 April 2005, <<http://www.mun.ca/alciato/e018.html>> [accessed 18 April 2009].

PRUNING THE TREE OF VIRTUE IN SHAKESPEARE'S *TITUS ANDRONICUS*

Victoria Bladen

Shakespeare used botanical metaphors recurrently throughout his plays and sonnets, and tree imagery is particularly prevalent.¹ Tzachi Zamir has recently noted the 'pervasive botanical imagery' in *Titus Andronicus* and its 'interfusion [...] with relentless suffering'.² This is particularly evident in Act II when Lavinia, daughter of the Roman general Titus, falls victim to the Goth brothers Chiron and Demetrius. Raped and mutilated, with her tongue cut out and both hands severed, Lavinia is found by her uncle Marcus and framed, among other metaphors, as a tree:

Speak, gentle niece, what stern ungentle hands
Hath lopped and hewed and made thy body bare

¹ Caroline F. E. Spurgeon observed the recurrence of tree imagery in Shakespeare's work, identifying a particular vein of imagery that runs through the history plays as that 'of the growth and destruction of a tree', used as a metaphor for the royal house, as well as metaphors of growth and decay in a garden: *Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells Us*, 2nd edn (Boston: Beacon, 1958), pp. 214, 216–19. The metaphorical linking of gardening and kingship is often considered in the context of *Richard II* where there is an extended allegory of the kingdom as a garden, and the failure to prune is seen as resulting in political disorder. Spurgeon also noted that Shakespeare often visualizes humans as trees and plants (p. 87). More recently, Gabriel Egan has explored nature in Shakespeare's work from an ecocritical and ecopolitical perspective in *Green Shakespeare: From Ecopolitics to Ecocriticism* (New York: Routledge, 2006). See also my article on the cedar tree prophesy in *Cymbeline*: Victoria Bladen, 'The Tree of Life and the King's Arboreal Bodies in Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* (1610)', in *Rapt in Secret Studies: Emerging Shakespeares*, ed. by Darryl Chalk and Lawrence Johnson (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2010), pp. 213–29.

² Tzachi Zamir, 'Wooden Subjects', *New Literary History*, 39 (2008), 277–300 (p. 277).

Of her two branches, those sweet ornaments
Whose circling shadows kings have sought to sleep in. (II. 4. 16–19)³

Shakespeare creates the image of a tree through language. Arms are ‘branches’ that formerly cast ‘circling shadows’, a shade sought by kings.⁴ Lavinia’s hands were ‘like aspen leaves upon a lute’ (II. 4. 45), but now the body is chopped like wood, ‘lopped’ and ‘hewed’.⁵ The scene is commonly seen as problematic, due to the length and florid nature of Marcus’s speech, and it is sometimes cut from dramatic productions.⁶ As Alan Hughes notes, for most critics Shakespeare’s synthesis of poetic language with horrific visual imagery creates difficulty (p. 33). Lavinia is seen as ‘one of the chief stumbling-blocks to the appreciation of the play’ and Marcus’s speech as ‘the most unpalatable’.⁷ At the same time, critics generally recognize the significance of Lavinia as an iconic and symbolic centre of the play. As Philip Kolin notes:

Understanding Lavinia is a key to understanding *Titus Andronicus*. How she is represented determines what is represented. To come to terms with Lavinia’s plight entails coming to terms with the heart of violence in *Titus*.⁸

The tree imagery, as Zamir observes, often goes unnoticed in critical accounts of the play.⁹ Interestingly it has been in film criticism, on Julie Taymor’s *Titus* (2000),

³ All quotations are taken from the New Cambridge edition of *Titus Andronicus*, ed. by Alan Hughes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

⁴ As Jonathan Bate notes, ‘lopped’ and ‘hewed’ are traditional terms from forestry: ‘lopping’ referred to cutting off side branches and ‘hew’ was generally the verb used for chopping down trees with an axe: *Titus Andronicus*, ed. by Jonathan Bate (London: Arden Shakespeare, 1995), p. 137, n. 46.

⁵ As Zamir observes, the trees of the wood ‘take on the very shape of trauma, when Lavinia [metamorphoses] into a part of these same woods’: ‘Wooden Subjects’, p. 285.

⁶ *Titus Andronicus*, ed. by Bate, pp. 59–60.

⁷ Eugene M. Waith, ‘The Metamorphosis of Violence in *Titus Andronicus*’, *Shakespeare Survey*, 10 (1957), 39–49 (pp. 46–47); see also *Titus Andronicus*, ed. by Bate, p. 59.

⁸ Philip C. Kolin, ‘*Titus Andronicus* and the Critical Legacy’, in *Titus Andronicus: Critical Essays*, ed. by Philip C. Kolin (New York: Garland, 1995), pp. 3–55 (p. 20).

⁹ The arguments of Albert Tricomi are an exception in this regard: ‘The Mutilated Garden in *Titus Andronicus*’, *Shakespeare Studies*, 31 (1976), 89–105; and ‘The Aesthetics of Mutilation in *Titus Andronicus*’, *Shakespeare Survey*, 27 (1974), 11–19. I agree with Tricomi’s suggestion that the image of Lavinia as a lopped tree is a central image of the tragedy. Tricomi sees the image of the garden as contrasted with the predatory animal imagery denoting barbarism (‘Mutilated Garden’, p. 90). He reads Lavinia as embodying multiple elements of a garden and focuses particularly on

that the metaphor of Lavinia as a severed tree has received renewed focus.¹⁰ In my view the scene is not simply gratuitous violence aestheticized with meaningless metaphors. Rather Shakespeare's language invokes significant intertextual references which were potentially recognizable to his audience and to us, if we bring to them a more nuanced historical awareness. Shakespeare's imagination was indebted to ideas and iconography surrounding the motif of the tree of virtue as the embodiment of a moral topography, as well as extensive religious and political meanings associated with lopping and pruning. This essay proposes some historical contexts within which to place Shakespeare's metaphorical imagery, seeking to situate the tragic tableau of the stage within the playwright's wider cultural world.¹¹ It argues that as a savage space the forest reflects the fallen state of Rome, and Lavinia, as a lopped tree, evokes the damaged virtue of a Rome overrun with vice.

In an emblem book roughly contemporaneous with Shakespeare's play, Joachim Camerarius's *Symbolorum et emblematum* (Nuremberg, 1590), the emblem *Intacta virtus* (Uninjured virtue) shows a laurel tree standing tall and flourishing as lightning strikes around it (Figure 3). The accompanying motto translates as 'Thus the fairest virtue stands firm, unharmed by evil | Just as the laurel tree is untouched by the fearful lightning bolt'. To the left is an image of a severed trunk, which has not been so fortunate. The flourishing tree is a metaphor for virtue, and its healthy state aligns with its moral strength, while the fallen tree at the left is linked with moral failure. This association of virtue with trees was not an isolated example but part of an extensive metaphorical language of trees throughout Renaissance culture.

the fountain imagery. While Tricomi does not consider the tree of virtue specifically, he calls the body politic 'that tree of civilized life' (p. 102). Derek Traversi also notes the 'persistent use of images relating to trees' in his *An Approach to Shakespeare*, vol. 1: *Henry VI to Twelfth Night*, 3rd edn (New York: Anchor, 1969), p. 54. Traversi sees the function of the tree imagery as relating the horrors to the woods and natural surroundings, evoked in their relation to human passions (p. 54).

¹⁰ This arose from Taymor's literalization of Shakespeare's metaphor, presenting Lavinia on a tree-trunk with sprays of dry sticks protruding from her wrists, effected with digital technology: Julie Taymor, *Titus: The Illustrated Screenplay* (New York: Newmarket, 2000), p. 89. For an analysis of Taymor's interpretation and intersections with Shakespeare's vision, see my article 'The Lopped Lavinia Tree: Intersections of Fallen Terrain Between Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* and Julie Taymor's *Titus*', in *Shakespeare on Screen: The Roman Plays*, ed. by Sarah Hatchuel and Nathalie Vienne-Guerrin (Rouen: Publications des Universités de Rouen et du Havre, 2009), pp. 67–103.

¹¹ Whereas Zamir sees Shakespeare's botanical imagery as connected to moral misgivings over tragedy as aestheticized pain, I see Shakespeare's use of tree imagery as directed at commenting on the sterility of revenge and violence in the fallen, merciless, pre-Christian world.

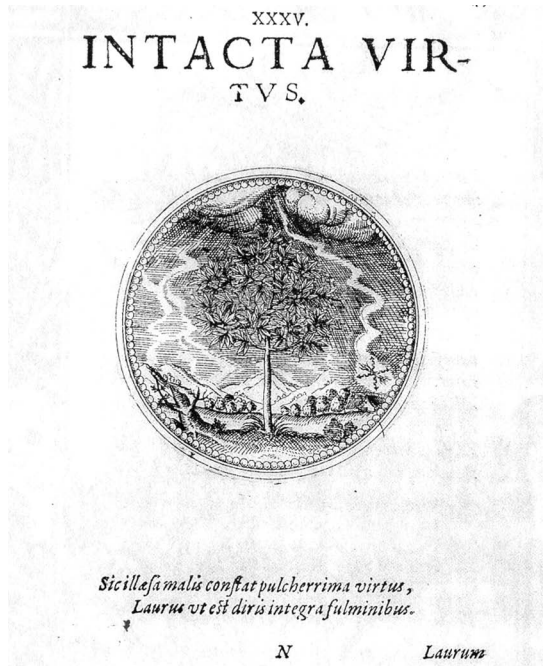


Figure 3. *Intacta virtus* (Uninjured virtue), emblem from Joachim Camerarius, *Symbolorum et emblematum* (Nuremberg, 1590). Rare Books Division, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library. Reproduced by permission of the Library, Princeton University, NJ.

looking on anxiously. Her arms are branches, her hair is leafy, and green shoots sprout from her breasts. Around the figure is a scroll reading: 'AGITE PELLITE SEDIBUS NOSTRIS | FOEDA HAEC VICIORUM MONSTRA | VIRTUTUM COELITUS AD NOS REDEUNTUM | DIVAE COMITES' ('Go on, companions of the goddess of the virtues [which are] returning to us, and expel from our homes these foul monsters of the vices'). This anthropomorphic figure is the tree of virtue, the presiding spirit of the enclosed garden space. The garden of virtue is a metaphor for the human soul, threatened by sexuality and the vices and protected by wisdom and chastity.

Throughout Renaissance culture there were various manifestations of woman-tree hybrids. Classical precedents for the motif included the caryatids (women with the bodies of trees), dryads (tree nymphs), and hamadryads (tree nymphs whose life depended on that of their tree). They often articulated ideas of virtue and female sexuality, and the patrolling of its borders. A tree of virtue figure also appears in the

In Andrea Mantegna's *Minerva Expelling the Vices from the Garden of Virtue* (1502) Minerva, the goddess of wisdom, Diana, and a third goddess, representing chastity, chase Venus and various figures of vice from a garden. The cardinal virtues (fortitude, justice, and temperance) watch from a cloud above. Some vices have already fled from the garden and appear through an aperture in the leafy arcades. The barren field depicts a number of cut stumps from which new shoots emerge; these express

both the sterility of vice and the hope of reform in the wake of the vices' expulsion. At the left is an elongated woman-tree figure

background of Perugino's *Battle of Chastity and Love* (1505) where the landscape represents the human soul over which the warring factions of love and chastity battle. In the foreground, particular types of trees accentuate the identification of the principal figures. Minerva, poised to spear Cupid, is placed next to an olive tree on which her owl and shield (with the head of Medusa) are placed while Venus, attacked by Diana, is next to a myrtle tree.¹² Thus the two dominant trees of the foreground set up an opposition of wisdom and sensual love.

In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the nymph Daphne is transformed into a laurel tree to avoid being raped by Apollo. Encased in bark, her arboreal metamorphosis neutralizes her sexuality and makes her impenetrable. Perugino's tree of virtue is clearly Daphne, transforming into the laurel tree as she is embraced by Apollo, representing the victory of virtue over sensual love. Mantegna's tree of virtue was also likely perceived as Daphne, whose arboreal metamorphosis articulated her 'virtue'.¹³ In both works the landscapes are metaphors for the soul, while also analogous to a sexually vulnerable female open to invasion and attack. The female tree of virtue, around which the combatants fight, encapsulates the state of the moral and psychological landscape. She represents what is at stake and functions as the moral barometer of the whole. Amidst the conflict the tree of virtue is a fixed centre. In this static and passive state however, she is also powerless. Unable to defend herself, she can only watch as others protect her and fight for control of the moral terrain.

The image of Lavinia as a woman-tree hybrid resonates with a tradition that articulated an opposition between virtue and vice centred on the female body. The anthropomorphic tree was the centre of the *psychomachia*, a war in the landscape of the mind. In *Titus Andronicus* conflict between Romans and Goths plays out a battle of virtue and vice, although there is no clear assignment of good or evil to either side.¹⁴ Rather, both sides are implicated in the inevitable movement towards

¹² Egon Verheyen, *The Paintings in the Studiolo of Isabella d'Este at Mantua* (New York: New York University Press, 1971), pp. 26–27.

¹³ In his analysis of Mantegna's painting Yael Even assumes that the woman-tree figure is Daphne: 'Daphne (Without Apollo) Reconsidered: Some Disregarded Images of Sexual Pursuit in Italian Renaissance and Baroque Art', *Studies in Iconography*, 18 (1997), 143–59 (pp. 152–57). Similarly, Verheyen assumes the tree is Daphne as well as the personification of deserted virtue (p. 33). However, the matter is not beyond doubt: Martindale and Garavaglia describe the tree of virtue figure as 'imprisoned in an olive tree' rather than laurel; see Andrew Martindale and Niny Garavaglia, *Complete Paintings of Mantegna* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1967), p. 118.

¹⁴ Jean E. Howard describes *Titus Andronicus* as a study of the 'metaphoric borderland between the barbarous and the civilized' where Rome is paradoxically both: 'Shakespeare, Geography, and

moral and political collapse.¹⁵ The role of the tree of virtue in Renaissance iconography is analogous to that played by Lavinia, as framed by Shakespeare's metaphor of a hybrid woman-tree. Her state encapsulates the wider state of Rome which is under attack by vice.

When Titus first enters Rome he is 'bound with laurel boughs' (I. 1. 74). Ironically the reference presages the fate of Lavinia whose fate and metaphorical transformation recalls the myth of Daphne becoming the laurel tree. In Ovid's account, Daphne's transformed body of laurel is directly linked with Roman triumphal performance. The thwarted god proclaims:

You will accompany the generals of Rome, when the Capitol beholds their long triumphal processions, when joyful voices raise the song of victory. You will stand by Augustus' gate-posts too, faithfully guarding his doors, and keeping watch from either side over the wreath of oak leaves that will hang there. Further, as my head is ever young, my tresses never shorn, so do you also, at all times, wear the crowning glory of never-fading foliage.¹⁶

Thus when Titus enters, crowned with laurel, he bears the traces of the transformed woman-tree who is also the symbolic protector of the city. Lavinia, through Marcus's speech, becomes the physical embodiment of that symbolic tree, and the lopping of her branches is a sign of the fallen, penetrated city.

In various other Renaissance works of art trees of virtue appear, not as woman-tree hybrids but as boundary markers between opposing moral terrains. In Lorenzo Lotto's *Allegory of Virtue and Vice* (1505; Figure 4) the tree not only divides the terrain, but is marked with the visible signs of the division itself. The side aligned with vice is lopped, designating its moral and spiritual sterility, while the virtuous side is verdant and flourishing. The landscape of virtue is initially harsh and inhospitable, but rises to a higher topographical and spiritual plane, while the terrain of vice is seemingly inviting but ultimately bereft of virtue. The iconography of these

the Work of Genre on the Early Modern Stage', *Modern Language Quarterly*, 64 (2003), 299–322 (p. 315). Coppélia Kahn notes that 'the play sets up an antithesis between civilized Rome and the barbaric Goths only to break it down: the real enemy lies within': *Roman Shakespeare: Warriors, Wounds and Women* (New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 47.

¹⁵ As Bate notes, the demand of Lucius for a human, rather than an animal, sacrifice marks the entry of barbarism into the city; by contrast the supposedly barbaric Gothic queen Tamora speaks a 'Roman language of valour, patriotism, piety, mercy and nobility': *Titus Andronicus*, ed. by Bate, p. 6. Alan Sommers notes that none of the victims are entirely innocent, except possibly Bassianus, "'Wilderness of Tigers': Structure and Symbolism in *Titus Andronicus*", in *Titus Andronicus: Critical Essays*, ed. by Kolin, pp. 115–28 (p. 125).

¹⁶ *The Metamorphoses of Ovid*, ed. by Mary M. Innes (London: Penguin, 1955), book I, p. 44.

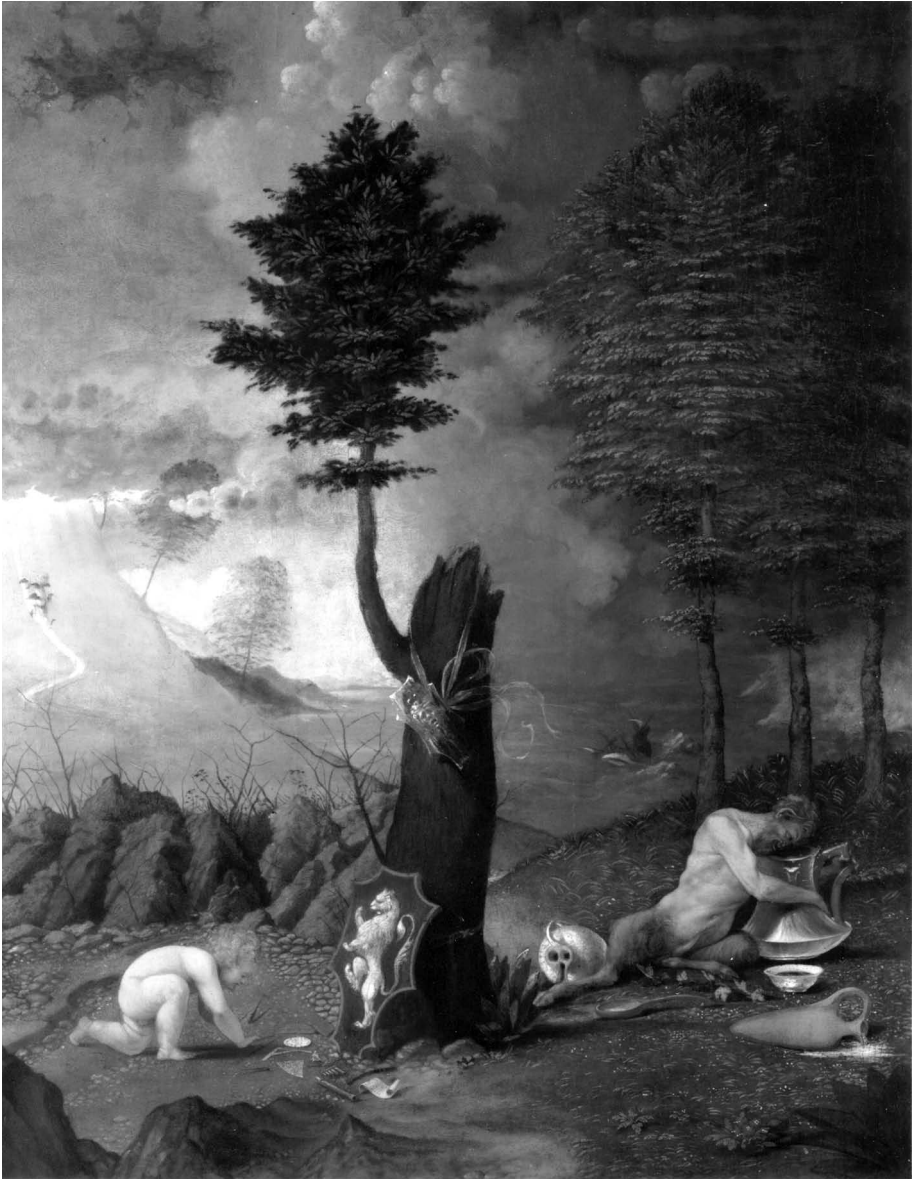


Figure 4. Lorenzo Lotto, *Allegory of Virtue and Vice*, 1505.
 Reproduced by permission of the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC.

sixteenth-century works illustrates a fusion of topography with moral and psychological states. It also illuminates how the motif of the tree of virtue was conceived as a border between and reflection of the two states.

The tree of virtue as an expression of humanity's moral state also appears in two engravings designed by Andrea Mantegna. In *Allegory of the Rescue of Humanity: Virtus Deserta* (c. 1500–05) the helpless tree of virtue stands amongst the rubble of civilization while alongside is a pit of bodies, from which a victim reaches out to the figure of Mercury at the right. The tree displays a sign 'Virtu Deserta'. It articulates the abandonment of virtue by humanity which is then cast into the pit, with Mercury, representing knowledge and ascent, their only hope. In *Allegory of the Fall of Ignorant Humanity: Virtus Combustus* (c. 1500–05) while the vices reign, the tree of virtue is consumed in a fire at the right. In these engravings the attack on and destruction of the tree of virtue embodies humanity's moral decline and the degradation of civilization.

While the motif of a woman-tree was indebted to classical myth, the articulation of virtue as arboreal evolved from biblical passages and metaphors. In the Psalms the virtuous are likened to evergreen trees (1. 3).¹⁷ Throughout the Bible, the human condition, and the spiritual paradigm in which humanity is placed, is often expressed in botanical terms. A primary conceptual dichotomy is established in Genesis between the two trees in the Garden of Eden: the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which is the tree of the Fall, and the tree of life, which represents immortality (Genesis 2. 8–9). In the New Testament the tree of life is reframed as a type of Christ, who is proclaimed as 'the true vine' (John 15. 1). The tree is imagined as the font of immortal life in the future heavenly Jerusalem (Revelation 22. 2). In Romans Christ's followers are 'grafted with' Christ in imitation of his crucifixion in order to reproduce his resurrection (6. 5–6).¹⁸ The various arboreal motifs and metaphors throughout the Bible, which drew on botanical properties and horticultural practices, gave rise to a rich vein of arboreal symbolism in medieval and Renaissance culture. In the language of trees that evolved, trees were imbued with moral and political meanings, as well as religious.

¹⁷ All biblical quotations are taken from the facsimile of the 1560 Geneva Bible, ed. by Lloyd E. Berry (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969).

¹⁸ Other biblical passages with arboreal metaphors include Job 14. 7–12 (where the life of man is compared unfavourably with a tree which when cut will regenerate); The Song of Solomon 2. 3 (where the figure of the Bridegroom is likened to a tree under whose shade the Bride sits); and Mark 4. 30–32 (where the kingdom of heaven is likened to a tree).

Shakespeare and his audience were culturally exposed to a rich vein of arboreal symbolism through biblical text and iconography in a range of visual media. Maryanne Horowitz aptly describes the iconography that expressed these arboreal ideas as 'visual metaphors'.¹⁹ Through these, the fecundity of the tree of life was juxtaposed with the sterility of the tree of knowledge, reflecting the spiritual states potentially open to humanity. The tree of knowledge was often depicted as 'dry' or devoid of leaves.²⁰ It could also be expressed as a cut stump or tree with pruned branches. Pruning embodied both the notion of retribution and the cutting away of sin. In Matthew, John the Baptist warns 'And now also is the axe put to the roote of the trees: therefore euerie tre, which bringeth not forth the good frute, is hewen downe, and cast into the fyre' (Matthew 3. 10). In the Psalms the wicked are likened to cedars that God cuts down or to grass that withers (29. 5, 9; 37. 1–2, 35–36).

Many biblical passages use metaphors of pruning to express spiritual, moral, and political ideas. Lopping signifies retribution for political pride in the passage of Daniel. King Nebuchadnezzar has a dream of a tree reaching the sky and providing shade for wild animals. It is lopped and its human heart exchanged for the heart of a beast. Only a stump is left (Daniel 4. 7–15). Daniel interprets the King's dream, telling him that the tree is the King himself and that he will be reduced to a beast until he acknowledges his subservience to Heaven. The remaining stump is Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom which is kept for him until his reformation (Daniel 4. 16–24).

Pruning was commonly an optimistic motif. Therein was the paradoxical idea of a beneficial wounding whereby the crisis of lopping led to regrowth.²¹ The ultimate Christian articulation of this idea was the lopping of the tree of knowledge which led, through Christ's sacrificial death, to rebirth and the infinite regeneration of

¹⁹ Maryanne Cline Horowitz, *Seeds of Virtue and Knowledge* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), p. 57.

²⁰ 'And all the trees of [the] field shall knowe that I the Lord haue broght downe [the] hye tre, have exalted the lowe tre, that I haue dried vp the grene tre, and made the drye tre to florish' (Ezekiel 17. 24). In the thirteenth-century Hereford Mappa Mundi the *arbor sicca* or 'dry tree' appears outside of the boundary of paradise. In a twelfth-century mosaic apse of San Clemente, Rome, a foliate cross is accompanied by an inscription stating that the tree that was made dry by original sin becomes green again by means of the cross, Horowitz, *Seeds of Virtue and Knowledge*, pp. 67–68.

²¹ See generally Gerhard Ladner, 'Vegetation Symbolism and the Concept of Renaissance', in *De Artibus Opuscula XL: Essays in Honor of Erwin Panofsky*, ed. by Millard Meiss, 2 vols (New York: New York University Press, 1961), I, 303–22.

the tree of life. A cut tree could signify the death of Christ, with a shoot representing resurrection.²² Lopped branches and cut trunks appear extensively across religious art from the mid-fifteenth century, articulating these ideas.

Elizabethans were familiar with depictions of virtue and vice in the form of arboreal imagery.²³ The idea of the sins in the form of a tree diagram became current in the medieval period and appeared in wall paintings from the late fourteenth century.²⁴ Examples of broadsheets survive in which arboreal imagery is used by Protestants and Catholics to represent the other as the tree of vice.²⁵ As a child Elizabeth I translated a passage by Marguerite de Navarre from her *Le Miroir de l'ame pecheuse* (1531) in which she likens the feeling of sin to having a tree of vice growing inside her.²⁶ In a poem of 1567, 'The Doubt of Future Foes', Elizabeth writes that 'the top of hope' for her foes will prove 'the root of rue' (line 7) and that her sword will 'poll their tops' (line 16).²⁷

Shakespeare was also undoubtedly familiar with arboreal imagery as symbolic of the fall and regeneration of political regimes. When Elizabeth made her first procession through London, she was greeted, inter alia, with a tableau of two hills

²² Leonardo da Vinci, in one of his notebooks, sketched a cut stump with a resprouting branch. It is accompanied by a note that translates as 'the cut tree that reshoots — there's still hope' (*Sprouting Tree Stump and Falcon*, reproduced in Ladner, 'Vegetation Symbolism', fig. 7). In an engraving by Crispin van de Passe in George Wither's *A Collection of Emblemes, Ancient and Modern* (London, 1635; STC 25900a–d) a cut branch regenerates in the hand of God, while in the background the crucified Christ sprouts, with flanking branches, from the prone body of Jesse.

²³ See generally Horowitz, *Seeds of Virtue and Knowledge*, chap. 6: 'Vegetative Language of Virtue and Vice in Discourses on the Dignity or Depravity of Humankind'. Note that Saturninus is 'planted on the throne' (l. 1. 444); a plant of vice.

²⁴ See Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550–1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 53; A. Caiger-Smith, *English Medieval Mural Paintings* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), p. 49. Pride was commonly at the head of the tree and three branches would issue from each side, making up the seven sins. In some works the tree was a human figure (p. 49).

²⁵ See Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety*, pp. 152–55 (figs 13 and 14).

²⁶ 'I fele well that the roote of it is in me and outwardly i se no othere effecte but all is eyther braunche leaffe or els frutte that she bringeth furth all aboute me. If i thinke to loke for better, a braunche cometh and doth close myne eyes, and in my mouth doth fall when i wolde speake the frutte wich is so bytter to sualowe down. If my spirite be styrrred for to kraken [harken]: that a great multitude of leaffes doth entre in myne eares and my nose is all stoped wityh flowres': cited in Horowitz, *Seeds of Virtue and Knowledge*, pp. 142–45.

²⁷ *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, ed. by M. H. Abrams, Stephen Greenblatt, and others, 8th edn, 6 vols (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006), vol. B, p. 695.

with two trees, one dry and the other verdant, expressing hopes for the new reign. One was withered to represent a 'decayed commonwele', and the other was green to represent a 'flourishing commonwele', and between the two came figures of Truth and Time.²⁸ Likewise, pruning was a potent metaphor of reform, political, moral, or religious. Mary Queen of Scots, while a prisoner, embroidered an emblem depicting the hand of God with a pruning knife cutting away unfruitful branches from a vine (Figure 5), the motto reading *Virescit vulnere virtus* (Virtue thrives by a



Figure 5. Mary Queen of Scots, Norfolk Panel, embroidered cushion (c. 1570), T.33-1955. Reproduced by permission of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

wound).²⁹ The sentiment was directed at Elizabeth; the unfruitful branch of the royal house was to be cut, leaving the fruitful branch, Mary, to flourish.

Given the extensive presence of the language of trees in Shakespeare's culture, it is likely that his audience was potentially receptive to the nuances arising from his arboreal imagery. Lavinia as a lopped tree may well have invoked for viewers and readers the tree of virtue, Daphne, or arboreal metaphors from the Bible. The significance of the tree metaphor is also evident in the fact that arboreal language permeates the play; Lavinia's metaphor connects with other arboreal concepts.

At the beginning of the play Lucius calls on Titus for a sacrifice from the Goths: "That we may hew his limbs and on a pile | *Ad manes fratrum* [to our brother's

²⁸ Rosemary Freeman, *English Emblem Books* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1966), p. 49.

²⁹ The bed hangings were embroidered around 1570 by Mary Queen of Scots and Bess of Hardwick while Mary was a prisoner at Chatsworth. They include animals, birds, and moral emblems. See Margaret Swain, *The Needlework of Mary Queen of Scots* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1973), pp. 62–75, pp. 106–20.

shades] sacrifice his flesh' (I. 1. 97–98). The hewing of Alarbus's limbs links the limbs with the wood he is to be burnt on. It also foreshadows the attack on Lavinia since the word 'hewed' is used in conjunction with the lopping of Lavinia's limbs (II. 4. 17). The tree imagery continues after Tamora is unsuccessful in pleading for her son's life, with Lucius crying:

Away with him, and make a fire straight,
And with our swords upon a pile of wood
Let's hew his limbs till they be clean consumed. (I. 1. 127–29)

The human sacrifice will be hewn like the pile of wood. The suggestion of a lopped human-tree foreshadows the subsequent imagery of Lavinia as a cut tree. The parallel language illuminates the symmetry of violence between the actions of Romans and Goths.³⁰ As Tamora is shown no mercy by Titus in the opening scene of the play, she in turn will show no mercy to the pleading Lavinia. The sacrifice also inverts and complicates the initial contrast between purported Roman civilization and Gothic barbarity.³¹ The absence of mercy renders the practice of Roman virtue immoral. The death of Alarbus is an unnecessary exacerbation of the defeated Goths' humiliation. As Philip Collington has argued in relation to *Cymbeline*, the treatment of prisoners was emerging in the early modern period as a barometer of civilization or barbarism.³² Thus Titus's treatment of Alarbus marks him as barbaric, creating a juxtaposition between pagan Rome and the supposedly merciful Christian empire to follow. How Rome treats her prisoners comes back to haunt her as the Goths' position swiftly shifts from incarceration to central power when Saturninus chooses Tamora as his bride. After the execution of Alarbus, Lucius reports:

See, lord and father, how we have performed
Our Roman rites: Alarbus' limbs are lopped,
And entrails feed the sacrificing fire. (I. 1. 142–44)

³⁰ As Bate notes there is a 'brutal but elegant symmetrical structure' in the play: as Alarbus's limbs are lopped in Act I, so Lavinia's will be in Act II (p. 6). He also notes the parallel in forestry terms (p. 188). Similarly, Robert S. Miola notes that when Titus returns to the city to beg for mercy for his condemned sons in Act III. 1, there is a parallel with the opening scene when Tamora begged for her son's life and is shown no mercy: *Shakespeare's Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 206. As Traversi notes, *Approach to Shakespeare*, p. 54, Lavinia's torture answers to the sacrifice of Alarbus.

³¹ Traversi, *Approach to Shakespeare*, p. 47.

³² Philip Collington, "Graze, As You Find Pasture": Nebuchadnezzar and the Fate of *Cymbeline's* Prisoners', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 53 (2002), 291–322 (p. 301).

The lopping of Alarbus is the first of a series of loppings throughout the play. His body fuels the sacrificial fire while his death fuels a series of violent acts of revenge. Thus the opening scene is prophetic of the ensuing destruction that consumes Rome's civil structure. It echoes in the subsequent image of Lavinia as a lopped tree and is analogous to the iconography of Mantegna's *Virtus Combustus* of the burning of virtue. It also resonates with the biblical passage of Matthew 3. 10.

Arboreal language permeates the play and is also used in relation to Bassianus. While Lavinia is associated with virtue, Bassianus is linked with justice and his death is also presented, metaphorically, as a type of lopping.³³ Just prior to the attack on Lavinia Chiron says, 'Drag hence her husband to some secret hole | And make his dead trunk pillow to our lust' (II. 3. 129–30). The double meaning of 'trunk' presages the imminent lopping of Lavinia and aligns with the vein of arboreal imagery throughout the play. Related botanical imagery is used by Demetrius who threatens: 'First thresh the corn, then after burn the straw. | This minion stood upon her chastity' (II. 3. 123–24). The image of cutting then burning recalls the earlier imagery surrounding the sacrifice of Alarbus. Corn was the common iconographical attribute of Astraea, goddess of justice. Thus the sinister image of harvest emphasizes the absence of justice — *terras Astraea reliquit* (IV. 3. 4) — that propels the cycle of revenge.³⁴ It tragically echoes Titus's forlorn hope at the beginning of the play when he chose:

Lord Saturnine, whose virtues will, I hope,
Reflect on Rome as Titan's rays on earth
And ripen justice in this commonweal. (I. 1. 225–27)

³³ Critics commonly read Lavinia as representing virtue: Ann Haaker, 'Non sine causa: The Use of Emblematic Method in the Thematic Structure of *Titus Andronicus*', *Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama*, 13–14 (1970–71), 143–68 (p. 159). Sommers reads Lavinia as a type of virtue in contrast to Tamora as a figure of vice. He sees Lavinia as representing chastity, an authentic Roman value, and the couple as a union of public and private virtues, essential to the Roman ideal: in the forest, justice is slain and chastity mutilated ("Wilderness of Tigers", p. 124).

³⁴ See A. C. Hamilton, 'Titus Andronicus: The Form of Shakespeare Tragedy', in *Titus Andronicus: Critical Essays*, ed. by Kolin, pp. 129–45. According to Ovid in book 1 of the *Metamorphoses*, the original Golden Age under Saturn degenerated into the Silver Age under Jove, the Bronze Age, and finally the Iron Age when evil reigned and life became brutal. Astraea, as the embodiment of justice, is the last immortal to leave the earth, and her departure marks the final descent for mankind. See Francis A. Yates, 'Queen Elizabeth as Astraea', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 10 (1947), 27–82 (pp. 27–28).

The lack of virtue results in a ruined civic crop. Bassianus represents the only defence of virtue, and once he is killed in the forest there is no protection for Lavinia or Rome.

In presenting Lavinia with lopped hands, and framing her as a tree through Marcus's metaphor, Shakespeare appears to violently literalize iconography such as Lotto's *Allegory* and related biblical metaphors. This lopping conveys a sense of retribution and reflects on fallen Rome. Several critics have commented on the literalization of metaphor in *Titus Andronicus*.³⁵ Tricomi views this as an innovative dramatic experiment in Shakespeare.³⁶ While such a process may have been new in dramatic performance, such literalization of metaphor had significant precedents in visual art, particularly in relation to arboreal symbolism. In medieval and Renaissance religious iconography, metaphors such as Christ's claim to be the 'true vine' were commonly expressed visually in verdant, sprouting crosses or simply grape vines as church decoration.³⁷ In such imagery, the figurative became visual, creating a language that transcended literacy.

There is a particularly visual quality to the tableau of the mutilated Lavinia whose suffering, as Waith describes it, 'becomes an object of contemplation'.³⁸ There are potential Christian nuances to this quasi-crucifixion scene, given the arboreal iconography surrounding the cross. Lopped trees denoted the Fall in religious iconography, and the fall of Rome is articulated by Shakespeare in a similar

³⁵ Representative examples include Tricomi, 'Aesthetics of Mutilation', p. 11; Marion Wynne-Davies, "'The Swallowing Womb': Consumed and Consuming Women in *Titus Andronicus*", in *The Matter of Difference: Materialist Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare*, ed. by Valerie Wayne (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), pp. 129–51 (p. 144); and *Titus Andronicus*, ed. by Bates, p. 86. Traversi, *Approach to Shakespeare*, pp. 66–69, also finds 'a continuity of purpose' linking the visual and verbal image of human bodies 'lopp'd and hew'd' like trees.

³⁶ Tricomi, 'Aesthetics of Mutilation', p. 11. Critics have also observed this phenomenon in other Shakespearean plays. Peggy Simmonds notes a similar dramatic literalization of the emblem of the elm and vine topos in *Cymbeline: Myth, Emblem and Music in Shakespeare's Cymbeline. An Iconographic Reconstruction* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1992), pp. 248–68. See also Sarah Hatchuel on *Richard III* in *Shakespeare from Stage to Screen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 28.

³⁷ A range of interpretations existed. Christ could be presented as seated on a tree, crucified on a tree of life, with disciples on the branches, or medallions depicting various scenes of his life. In Giovanni da Modena's *Christ on the Tree of Life* (fifteenth century, Bologna) the tree of life, the sacrificial Christ, grows out from the tree of sin and death. In the York Minster, wrought iron decoration in the form of a vine (fourteenth century) denotes the idea of Christ as the vine.

³⁸ Waith, 'Metamorphosis of Violence', p. 47.

language. Many critics recognize an emblematic quality in the tableau of Lavinia.³⁹ The iconic and tragic vision is analogous to the visual component of an emblem while Marcus's speech is like that of a commentary on the allegory.⁴⁰ This transforms Lavinia metaphorically, while her bodily mutilation presents a horrific literalization of the motif of lopping.⁴¹

There are critical objections to what is seen as the 'reduction' of Lavinia to an emblematic type.⁴² Others see this quality as amplifying her significance. As Haaker notes, Shakespeare's use of emblematic imagery carries the meaning beyond the dramatic action.⁴³ Similarly Tricomi notes that metaphor is endowed with the capacity of extending almost infinitely the imaginative compass of a play and that through its embedded metaphors, a play can translate its immediate events in images that reach far beyond the limitations of the stage.⁴⁴ John Steadman notes the practice of using emblem books and iconographical manuals in the interpretation of dramatic works, but cautions against attempts to find specific sources.⁴⁵

While seeking specific sources is an impossible and unnecessary exercise, it is illuminating to map the potential conceptions and constructions that were available for Shakespeare's imagination to draw from. There is no single source or point of origin for such imagery, but rather bodies of analogous imagery that illuminate

³⁹ *Titus Andronicus*, ed. by Bate, p. 38; Haaker, 'Non sine causa', pp. 143–68; Maurice Charney, 'Titus Andronicus', in *Titus Andronicus: Critical Essays*, ed. by Kolin, pp. 261–66 (p. 261); *Titus Andronicus*, ed. by Hughes, p. 33; Hamilton, 'Titus Andronicus: The Form of Shakespeare Tragedy', p. 133; and Kolin, 'Titus Andronicus and the Critical Legacy', p. 21.

⁴⁰ Charney, 'Titus Andronicus', p. 261. As Wynne-Davies notes, Lavinia's role is metamorphosed in Marcus's speech: "The Swallowing Womb", p. 132. However, Wynne-Davies sees it as an example of an inappropriate textual composite.

⁴¹ Wynne-Davies, "The Swallowing Womb", pp. 139–40. Wynne-Davies expresses this as the 'brutal visualization of an otherwise common metaphor for the body politic' and notes that in *Titus Andronicus* the figurative tends to become the actual.

⁴² Kolin, 'Titus Andronicus and the Critical Legacy', p. 22.

⁴³ Haaker, 'Non sine causa', p. 144.

⁴⁴ Tricomi, 'Aesthetics of Mutilation', p. 12. Tricomi's view, however, is that *Titus Andronicus* differs from this ordinary process in that it draws its images directly from the narrower events of plot (p. 12).

⁴⁵ John M. Steadman, 'Iconography and Renaissance Drama: Ethical and Mythological Themes', *Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama*, 13–14 (1970–71), 73–122 (p. 112). As Kahn notes, what used to be conceived as 'source study', determined by assumptions about the author's intention and focused on Plutarch, has shifted focus to a sense of Shakespeare's diverse options for appropriating other texts (*Roman Shakespeare*, p. 20).

the dramatist's choices and potential meanings that arise. The arboreal imagery in relation to Lavinia was drawn from extensive networks of meanings beyond the play, potentially recognizable to Shakespeare's audience. Its invocation thus amplifies the significance of what happens to her. Shakespeare's use of an arboreal metaphor constructs the tableau of the mutilated Lavinia as emblematic of larger symbolic and narrative patterns, and its language echoes that of other episodes in the play, creating a web of interrelated nuances and references to bodies as trees that are lopped and pruned, bodies that mirror the larger political body of the city.

Lavinia's significance in the play is magnified by her close association with the idea of Rome, the mythologies of which also bring sylvan nuances. It is ironic that for a city traditionally associated with noble ideals, Rome's founding mythologies seem to abound with stories of rape.⁴⁶ Rome had also been vulnerable to invasion, sacked in 410 and 1527 CE. These associations intersect in Shakespeare's play where Rome, like Lavinia and the tree of virtue, is constructed as a woman vulnerable to attack.⁴⁷ As Willbern notes, the language in the opening scene presents Rome as a woman whose virtue is threatened by Saturninus and protected by Bassianus.⁴⁸ The fraternal conflict over Rome mirrors the fight between the Goth brothers over Lavinia, who replaces Rome as the contested prize.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ The rape of the vestal virgin Rhea Silvia by Mars, the god of war, resulted in the birth of Romulus and Remus. See Robert Pogue Harrison, *Forests: The Shadow of Civilisation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 48; and M. C. Howatson, *Oxford Companion to Classical Literature*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 490.

⁴⁷ David Willbern notes that cities are typically female in Shakespeare's works: 'Rape and Revenge in *Titus Andronicus*', in *Titus Andronicus: Critical Essays*, ed. by Kolin, pp. 171–94 (p. 173). Similarly, Clifford Chalmers Huffman has noted that the sack of Troy in the nearly contemporaneous poem *The Rape of Lucrece* (printed 1594) is linked with the violation of Lucrece: '*Titus Andronicus*: Metamorphosis and Renewal', *Modern Language Review*, 67 (1972), 730–41 (p. 733).

⁴⁸ Willbern, 'Rape and Revenge', pp. 172–74. Bassianus urges his followers to 'Keep then this passage to the Capitol, | And suffer not dishonour to approach | The imperial seat, to virtue consecrate, | To justice, continence and nobility' (I. 1. 12–15). The Saturninus faction represents rape: 'Open the gates and let me in' (I. 1. 62). Saturninus is directly compared to Tarquin at III. 1. 296–97.

⁴⁹ Gail Kern Paster, 'To Starve with Feeding: Shakespeare's Idea of Rome', in *Titus Andronicus: Critical Essays*, ed. by Kolin, pp. 225–31 (p. 227). These also recall two earlier conflicts, between Aeneas and Turnus over Lavinia, and between Romulus and Remus, the latter killed by his brother for jumping over the foundation stone of Rome's city wall: Howatson, *Oxford Companion to Classical Literature*, p. 490.

Many critics recognize the connection between Lavinia and Rome.⁵⁰ Huffman describes the mutilated Lavinia as ‘an emblem of Rome without justice’.⁵¹ The body of Lavinia is linked to the damaged political body of Rome, presented as female and headless:

MARCUS: [...] With these our late-deceased emperor's sons.
 Be *candidatus* then, and put it on,
 And help to set a head on headless Rome.
 TITUS: A better head her glorious body fits
 Than his that shakes for age and feebleness. (I. 1. 184–88)

Similarly, when Marcus pleads for unification at the end of the play, the Goth Aemilius proposes suicide for Rome:

Let Rome herself be bane unto herself,
 And she whom mighty kingdoms curtsy to,
 Like a forlorn and desperate castaway,
 Do a shameful execution on herself. (V. 3. 72–75)

The suggestion of Rome as a suicidal fallen woman comes almost directly after the scene of Titus killing Lavinia, thus linking the two.

Shakespeare's imagery of lopped trees has resonances in relation to the founding mythologies of Rome. Ovid's account in *Fasti* of Rome's beginnings involves the protection of two trees by a woodpecker and a wolf from Amulius wielding an axe. The woodpecker then brings food to Romulus and Remus who are suckled by the wolf.⁵² Given that a tale of Rome's founding involves the protection of trees from the threat of an axe, it seems fitting that in *Titus Andronicus*, a play that maps the disintegration of Rome, a central iconic image is a lopped tree. Lavinia's link to Rome is also suggested through references to Virgil's *Aeneid*. Lavinia is the wife of Aeneas by whom she bears a son Silvius (whose name means forest) who is reared in the woods and founds the dynasty of Alba Longa, the kingdom that precedes

⁵⁰ Hamilton, ‘*Titus Andronicus*: The Form of Shakespeare Tragedy’, p. 133; Willbern, ‘Rape and Revenge’, p. 174. Willbern notes that both Lavinia and Tamora can be seen as symbolic personifications of female Rome. They enact contrasting aspects: the pure and virtuous mother, threatened with attack and invasion, who needs protection and rescue, and the dangerous, seductive, threatening mother, from whom one needs protection (p. 174).

⁵¹ Huffman, ‘*Titus Andronicus*: Metamorphosis and Renewal’, p. 733. Similarly Tricomi argues that the mutilation of the Andronici is bound up with the mutilation of Rome and civilization: ‘Mutilated Garden’, p. 101.

⁵² Ovid's *Fasti: Roman Holidays*, trans. by B. R. Nagle (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 3. 30–38, 54, p. 82.

Rome.⁵³ Thus Shakespeare chooses the name of the woman whose fertility produced a son and founded an empire. In *Titus Andronicus* the lopped, sterile Lavinia-tree marks the end of that empire.

In *Titus Andronicus* Rome's moral and physical borders prove porous and subject to invasion. The political centre is penetrated by the former Goth prisoners who now wield power. The vulnerability of Lavinia, the former model of virtue and beauty, reflects that of Rome, and the lopping of the Lavinia-tree takes place in a forest that becomes a terrain of vice. As Tricomi observes, Lavinia and the forest are closely identified and share the same fate.⁵⁴ The link he discerns is analogous to the relationship between the tree of virtue and the moral terrain under attack in the visual examples outlined previously. Critics generally have recognized the forest as moral and political terrain and that it measures Rome's descent. Sommers sees the forest as a Dionysiac site of barbarism, threatening the idea of civilization as embodied in Rome.⁵⁵

The forest is an ambiguous site. It is initially described in attractive terms, but with sinister notes that presage the imminent events.⁵⁶ Such hints lie in Aaron's description:

The forest walks are wide and spacious
And many unfrequented plots there are,
Fitted by kind for rape and villainy. (II. 1. 114–16)

The 'wide and spacious' walks would have alerted Shakespeare's audience that the terrain is potentially one of vice and entrapment as in the Lotto image (Figure 4). The terrain of virtue was narrow and arduous by comparison. Miola notes the pun

⁵³ Virgil, *Aeneid*, trans. by Robert Fitzgerald (New York: Vintage, 1983), book 6; Harrison, *Forests*, p. 47. Lavinia is the daughter of Latinus, king of Latium (the region where the Trojans land) who was betrothed to Turnus, but then given by her father in marriage to Aeneas who kills Turnus (*Titus Andronicus*, ed. by Bate, p. 17). This connection has been noted by various critics, for example Miola, *Shakespeare's Rome*, p. 205; Wynne-Davies, "The Swallowing Womb", p. 145; and Willbern, 'Rape and Revenge'. As Bate notes, Lavinia, the mother of early Rome, becomes the mutilated daughter of late Rome (*Titus Andronicus*, ed. by Bate, p. 18).

⁵⁴ Tricomi, 'Mutilated Garden', pp. 91, 93.

⁵⁵ Sommers, "Wilderness of Tigers", pp. 122–23. See also Harrison, *Forests*, chap. 1, generally on the forest as the threat to civilization and what the latter defines itself against.

⁵⁶ Tricomi notes that the idyllic pastoral world of the forest always contained the possibility of its opposite ('Mutilated Garden', pp. 92–93, 96). As Traversi notes, in the forest episode the whole nature of the wood changes to meet the new mood, shifting from hunt to sterility, the transformation implying a moral desolation: *Approach to Shakespeare*, p. 53.

on 'plots' meaning mental schemes as well as physical locations.⁵⁷ The forest is also described in images of sterility, presaging the imminent image of Lavinia as lopped tree. Tamora describes the forest as 'barren', with leafless trees where 'nothing breeds' (II. 3. 92–96). She accuses Lavinia and Bassianus of threatening to bind her to 'the body of a dismal yew' (II. 3. 107), which eerily anticipates the arboreal tableau of Lavinia. The sterility of this terrain of vice is representative of the fallen state of Rome.

When Marcus describes Lavinia as a tree under 'Whose circling shadows kings have sought to sleep in' (II. 4. 19), the linking of monarchy with the tree magnifies the significance of the image and recalls the passage in Daniel in which the tree was a metaphor for the kingdom. Marcus's image has a sinister parody in the earlier vision of Tamora who entreats Aaron to join her in the shade:

The snake lies rolled in the cheerful sun,
The green leaves quiver with the cooling wind
And make a chequered shadow on the ground;
Under their sweet shade, Aaron, let us sit,
And whilst the babbling echo mocks the hounds. (II. 3. 13–17)

The imagery of quivering leaves and chequered shadows parallels the imagery that is shortly to be used by Marcus of Lavinia: 'circling shadows' (II. 4. 19) and hands that previously trembled 'like aspen leaves upon a lute' (II. 4. 45). The image of the two figures of vice sitting in the shade of a tree parallels the image created by Marcus of kings sitting in the shade of the Lavinia-tree. The entrance of these figures of vice into virtue's terrain, like those in the works by Mantegna, signal the degradation of that terrain and show it to be under attack. Like the entrance of the serpent into Eden, the presence of the coiled snake and the evil pair presage the imminent moral and civil descent. Likewise the mention of the elder tree at the edge of the pit (II. 3. 272–73) recalls the hanging of Judas.⁵⁸ In *Titus Andronicus* the forest becomes a garden of vice, a fallen Eden, and the moral terrain of corrupt Rome, with Lavinia as the totemic mutilated tree of virtue at its centre.

In *Titus Andronicus* Shakespeare questions what is 'civilized' and what is 'barbarous'. In a Christian context, revenge was condemned, a right reserved for God. On the title page of the 1587 edition of the annotated Geneva Bible (first published 1560), the quotation below the lower picture panel is 'The Lord shall fight for you, therefore hold you your peace. Exodus 14. 14'. Shakespeare questions the efficacy of

⁵⁷ Miola, *Shakespeare's Rome*, p. 202.

⁵⁸ As Simmonds notes, *Cymbeline: Myth, Emblem and Music*, p. 255, Shakespeare refers to the tradition in *Love's Labor's Lost*.

revenge and what it does to people. In Tamora's words 'Sweet mercy is nobility's true badge' (I. 1. 119). Ironically this simple truth is spoken by a supposedly barbarous Goth. Roman justice, punishing indiscriminately and without mercy, is brutal.⁵⁹

Shakespeare's arboreal imagery is directly relevant to the interrogation of revenge in *Titus Andronicus*. Just as arboreal language articulated the boundary between virtue and vice, it also expressed the division between retribution for original sin, the harsh application of Judaic Law under the Old Testament, and mercy emanating from Christ under the New Testament. In Lucas Cranach the Elder's *The Law and the Gospel* (1529) a composite dry-and-verdant tree divides the centre of the panel. The left side is withered, aligning with the sphere of sin, where the devil and death usher a damned soul into a burning pit. On the right side, where the tree flourishes, is the crucified and resurrected Christ. The division and dual state of the tree also mark the distinction between the Law, characterized by retribution for sin, and mercy under the New Testament.⁶⁰ As Horowitz notes, the tree represents the key choice from a Lutheran perspective between following the letter of the law or Christ's mercy.⁶¹ In *Titus Andronicus* it is adherence to strict Roman law, without compromise or mercy, which results in tragic consequences. The lopped Lavinia-tree is emblematic of fallen Rome, analogous to the barren side of the terrain in such works and aligned with the harsh consequences of strict legality and adherence to law.

The death of Titus at the end of the play aligns, like his daughter's, with the fall of Rome. His body is also a lopped tree. Lucius urges Marcus to draw near to 'shed obsequious tears upon this trunk' (v. 3. 151). While the immediate 'trunk' is the body of Titus, it is also, in the greater symbolic scheme of the play, the severed trunk of Rome as a political entity. Marcus's speech at the conclusion of the play imagines mending after dismemberment:

You sad-faced men, people and sons of Rome,
By uproars severed, as a flight of fowl

⁵⁹ Huffman, 'Titus Andronicus: Metamorphosis and Renewal', p. 740; Miola, *Shakespeare's Rome*, p. 201.

⁶⁰ Horowitz notes that the context of this work is Martin Luther's attempt to convert Jews to Christianity (*Seeds of Virtue and Knowledge*, pp. 139–41), and also Luther's accusations against the Catholic Church of 'judaizing' (p. 141).

⁶¹ Horowitz, *Seeds of Virtue and Knowledge*, p. 141. A similar composition and ideology appear in a Bible cover of 1537 where a central trunk divides into two; the left side is dry, aligning with the Fall, while the right side flourishes, aligning with the resurrection of Christ: *The Byble, Translated by Thomas Matthew* (London, 1537).

Scattered by winds and high tempestuous gusts,
 O let me teach you how to knit again
 This scattered corn into one mutual sheaf,
 These broken limbs again into one body. (v. 3. 67–72)⁶²

The people of Rome are 'severed', recalling the severance of Lavinia, their Roman symbol. Political and social disintegration are imagined as a lost harvest and bodily dismemberment. The suggestion of the regathering of the corn, Astraea's attribute, envisages the reappearance of justice.⁶³

Understandably many critics see no optimism in the end of the play. As Kahn observes, viewing Young Lucius as a figure who will stop the cycle of violence is problematic. When Lavinia reveals her attackers Young Lucius claims: 'If I were a man | Their mother's bedchamber should not be safe' (IV. 1. 107–08). To this Marcus replies 'Ay, that's my boy!' (IV. 1. 110) which suggests that the cycle of violence would continue with the next generation.⁶⁴ Yet there are hints of optimism. Lucius expresses hope: 'May I govern so | To heal Rome's harms and wipe away her woe' (V. 3. 146–47), which again figures Rome as a woman to be healed and comforted, reiterating the link between Lavinia and Rome.⁶⁵ In the play there is no express direction as to the fate of Aaron and Tamora's child; however, if it is accepted that Lucius was a person to keep his word, then it may be assumed that the child lives, which in a play awash with blood is a significant shift from the cycle of revenge.⁶⁶ Lucius, as several critics have noted, bears the name of the first Christian

⁶² As Anthony Young notes, Marcus is the healer and mediator: "Ripen Justice in This Commonweal": Political Decay and Regeneration in *Titus Andronicus*, *Renaissance Papers* (1998), 39–51 (p. 47).

⁶³ Tricomi aptly describes this reconstitution and regeneration of the mutilated garden as the play's 'resolving metaphor': 'Mutilated Garden', p. 102.

⁶⁴ Kahn, *Roman Shakespeare*, p. 68. Similarly, Hamilton saw no consolation at the play's end since Lucius initiated the cycle of revenge by demanding the sacrifice of Tamora's son, and ultimately shows her no mercy: '*Titus Andronicus*: The Form of Shakespeare Tragedy', pp. 130, 134.

⁶⁵ Huffman sees Lucius as representing the nature of true justice, civilization, and the renewal of Rome: '*Titus Andronicus*: Metamorphosis and Renewal', p. 733. Yates also perceives optimism in the ending, linking Lucius with the return of Astraea: 'Queen Elizabeth as Astraea', p. 75.

⁶⁶ As Miola, *Shakespeare's Rome*, p. 215, notes, in *Titus Saturninus*/Saturn rules over a city that devours its own children until Lucius stops the hideous cycle by refraining from killing another's child. Huffman perceives Christian nuances to the play in that it allows for recognition by the audience of a higher code than the strict justice of imperial Rome: '*Titus Andronicus*: Metamorphosis and Renewal', p. 732. Lucius represents renewal in the return of Astraea and justice (*ibid.*, pp. 738, 740).

king of England.⁶⁷ Thus he suggests the beginning of a new empire after the fall of the old. He also bears a sylvan trace to his name. The word *lucus* means grove.⁶⁸ Young Lucius is earlier termed a 'tender sapling' (III. 2. 50) by Titus. If the old regime is a cut trunk, then there is hope for new shoots. It is this branch of the Andronici family tree that ultimately represents hope of regeneration for the political terrain.

The hybrid Lavinia-tree was indebted to various conceptions of a dual-sided tree that, with its juxtaposed sides of virtue and vice, sterility and fecundity, and savagery and healing, reflected the human condition. The tableau of Lavinia can be read in a range of interlinked ways. She can be seen as a dramatic interpretation of the idea of the stricken tree of virtue, around whom rage virtue and vice. Lavinia can also be read as Daphne's abject shadow, the antithesis of evergreen Roman triumph and the failure of virtue. Shakespeare's visual metaphor also echoes biblical figures of lopping as retribution and reform, reflecting the fallen state of Rome in a Christian framework. In Christian ideology and iconography, man's isolation from God reflected his degraded state and his expulsion from the fertility of Eden to the barren wilderness beyond the garden wall. Withering was the religious iconography of the Fall, and Lavinia as an arboreal icon can be read as embodying not just the immediate violence of Rome but also man's fallen nature.

Analysis of the historical contexts for Shakespeare's imagery invites us to consider ways in which artists and audiences framed perceptions of the human condition and its failings. As can be seen, these are wide ranging and fluid. Thomas Cartelli and Katherine Rowe have aptly observed:

Allusion is of its very nature an artistic transaction controlled as much by audience as by artist. It is an unstable device precisely because it invites readers, viewers, or listeners to draw on 'external' associations that may range from the widely shared to the idiosyncratic. It is likely, therefore, to produce varied, even contradictory responses.⁶⁹

Shakespeare's metaphor emerged from a culture saturated with symbolic tree imagery, creating a range of meanings potentially recognizable to his audience. Exploration of Shakespeare's rich imagery opens up these potential nuances for contemporary audiences, enhancing readings of the play.

⁶⁷ In John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* (London, 1563), a book that was placed in most parish churches in England, the account begins with Lucius, the first Christian king, and ends with Elizabeth (Yates, 'Queen Elizabeth as Astraea', pp. 42, 71).

⁶⁸ *Lucus* also referred to a burnt-out clearing; an eye in the sense of an opening of the forest (Harrison, *Forests*, pp. 9–10).

⁶⁹ Thomas Cartelli and Katherine Rowe, *New Wave Shakespeare on Screen* (Cambridge: Polity, 2007), p. 17.

Lavinia is the boundary marker of a terrain under conflict between virtue and vice, and she bears the mark of that conflict. On one level that terrain is Rome as political entity, city, and moral ideal. At the same time, however, the decline of Rome presents a tragic precedent and warning for any political state, including England as Rome's successor. Shakespeare's metaphor of a severed tree embodied in a woman attacked in the forest outside Rome, the site of Rome's mythic founding, is a vehicle for reflection on what Rome has become in *Titus Andronicus*. It is adherence to strict Roman law without compromise or mercy that results in tragic consequences. Rome is thus implicitly aligned with the world of the Old Testament and penitential law. Shakespeare questions the efficacy of revenge and exposes its sterility, articulated in the image of the lopped Lavinia-tree.

Shakespeare's imagery drew from various veins of arboreal imagery in his culture, imagery that held deep resonances in the collective imagination of his audience. When Shakespeare's arboreal imagery is viewed alongside the metaphors and iconographical traditions surrounding trees, it acquires significance beyond grotesque violence. His metaphor of Lavinia as a cut tree is not anachronistic rhetoric in the face of mindless violence. Nor is it a simple appropriation of a single emblematic motif. Rather it is a complex invocation drawing upon the body of arboreal symbolism culturally available. It intersects a motif of virtue as a barometer of a moral space with the retributive and reform associations of pruning. Reading Lavinia in this way is not to reduce her character but rather to amplify her significance. Nor does it efface the misogynist violence that remains capable of moving an audience. However, placing this imagery in its cultural context illuminates how the tableau functions in the play as the literalism of a metaphor which evokes a plurality of meanings. The motif of the lopped tree is resonant with the sterility of revenge in comparison with the regenerative qualities of mercy. The absence of mercy leaves the moral terrain of a state barren and open to vice, leading to the fall of empire.

In this complex, articulate arboreal imagery, as is the case across Shakespeare's body of work, the boundaries between stage and world were fluid and permeable. An iconic stricken tree, performed by Lavinia, comments on the sterility of revenge and absence of mercy in a fallen, pre-Christian world. The meaning of the violence Lavinia suffers is not confined to her character but resonates at a macrocosmic level, reflecting the moral choices of humanity and political states. Metaphors of lopped trees in Shakespeare's culture warned of the need for political virtue but were also, paradoxically, potentially optimistic emblems; lopping of the political state could ultimately prove a beneficial pruning.

TWENTIETH-CENTURY AUSTRALIAN *DREAMS*

Alan Brissenden

During the performance interval of one of Shakespeare's other plays, which was not going too well, Stanley Wells heard a schoolboy saying plaintively, 'I wish it was *A Midsummer Night's Dream*'. 'His was not a subtle form of theatre criticism,' Wells comments, 'but the remark illustrates the affection in which this play is held, and the general confidence in its power to entertain.'¹ That power was well illustrated in the last decades of the twentieth century in Australia by the great success of several outdoor presentations in city botanic gardens, particularly those of Glenn Elston, whose first production was in Melbourne in 1988; another went to the 1990 Adelaide Festival, and in the summer of 1993 two were running simultaneously in Sydney and Melbourne, with further revivals in 1996. To some people it was thoroughly, even offensively, Australian, and in this paper, as well as looking at twentieth-century performances of the *Dream* in Australia, I shall be considering whether we can begin to talk of an Australian style in Shakespearean production.

But more of Glenn Elston later, as I want to begin with one of Australia's most adventurous turn-of-the-century theatrical entrepreneurs, George Musgrove, then go on to the significance of Allan Wilkie, who formed the first Australian Shakespeare company. After Wilkie the doldrums of the 1930s and 1940s were followed by a Shakespearean efflorescence, but it was not until the 1970s that a vigorously Australian tone began to be heard. It has continued to develop, with *A Midsummer Night's Dream* a prime vehicle.

¹ William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, ed. by Stanley Wells (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980), p. 7.

Musgrove was in partnership with J. C. Williamson during the 1890s, but in 1900 he went out on his own. Leasing Melbourne's Princess Theatre, he had success with colourful opera seasons and plays and in 1902 the first Australian concert tour of Nellie Melba. The following year he turned to Shakespeare, presenting *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 'on a Scale of Magnificence never before attempted in Australia', according to the advertisement (*Argus*, 13 April, p. 10). The play was produced by Robert Courtneidge, who had directed it at the Prince's Theatre in Manchester in 1898. Apart from Theseus, Hippolyta, Lysander, Snug, and Snout, the principal characters at the Princess were all played by newly arrived English actors, now forgotten, and following Madame Vestris's Covent Garden precedent of 1840 there was a female Oberon, as well as a female Puck. Both these characters sang, as did Titania, for not only was this production lavish in scenery and costume, it was also in the direct line of descent from Purcell's *Fairy Queen* which had included so many musicalized versions of the play throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The score included most of Mendelssohn's music for the play and the overture to Weber's *Oberon*. A special note announced that 'During the progress of Act III, when Puck "o'ercasts the night", Mendelssohn's "Nocturne" will be played by the Orchestra whilst Lysander, Hermia, Demetrius and Helena are asleep upon the grass'. This, according to the critic of the Melbourne *Age*, was 'listened to with rapt attention by the audience and followed by vociferous applause. In fact,' he goes on significantly, 'A Midsummer Night's Dream on Saturday evening was something more than a dramatic entertainment, for it had many of the instrumental, and some of the vocal, attractions of an operatic performance' (13 April 1903, p. 6).

The settings received similar acclaim. The same critic draws attention to the fact that although the first scene was 'of Athens not as it was in the time of Theseus, when it was only a straggling village [...] but as it appeared in the age of Pericles', the audience 'was prepared to surrender itself to the illusion of the scene, and to forget the present in a past that was impressed with a character of singular splendour and replete with a perpetual charm', largely unaware, one suspects, of the anachronism. This scene and the next, Quince's House, were by Joseph Harker. The scenery for Acts II and III drew a rapturous response from the *Argus* critic, who wrote that 'the triumph of scenic art was in the woodland scenes by Hawes Craven, so enchanting in their loveliness, so cunning in their counterfeit of moss, fern, and flowers, so marvellously deceptive in their presentment of melting distances, as to hold the audience enthralled. It is hard to conceive a prettier stage picture than Titania presented asleep in her fairy bower' (13 April 1903, p. 6). From this description it is clear that Musgrove achieved in Melbourne what Michael Booth has

called 'the leisured sensual richness and languor, the drowning in colour and light, the sheer hedonistic indulgence of high quality pictorial spectacle [that characterized] Victorian Shakespeare, the sort of thing that has so utterly vanished from our own Shakespearean stage'.²

The costumes, praised for their 'richness and variety', were designed by Mr C. Wilhelm (real name William Charles John Pitcher), who was famous for his luxuriant dressing of Drury Lane pantomimes. The scenic designers were similarly illustrious. Hawes Craven had been Irving's designer and later Beerbohm Tree's. Joseph Harker also worked for Irving and Tree, and indeed Craven and Harker were the scene painters for Tree's *Midsummer Night's Dream*. More relevantly, they were the scenic artists for four long-running musicals for which Wilhelm had designed the costumes at the Apollo and the Gaiety theatres.

Among designers for the London stage, Craven, Harker, and Wilhelm were indeed stars. Among actors, the same cannot be said of those appearing in Australia. Musgrove advertised his 'English company' as being 'specially selected from the leading dramatic artists of England, and comprising several of the most prominent actors and actresses of the London stage', claims not substantiated by a search of contemporary cast lists in J. P. Wearing's *London Stage*. Not all of them had even appeared in London during the previous three years, and of those who had, most were in minor parts in short-run pieces. It would have been more honest, if far less persuasive, to say 'several of the more prominent actors and actresses of the provincial stage'. It was of course far easier to import sets and costumes than it was to induce actors to travel to the other side of the earth. And English theatre was booming. Writing from London to Williamson in Melbourne in 1897, Musgrove, whose job it was to get companies and shows together for Australia, said, 'The situation is getting more serious every day. Actors are very scarce. There are 12 fine new suburban theatres around London. There were over 20 suburban pantomimes this year. Comedians, principal boys and girls were at a premium'.³ Six years later the situation, not at all improved, would have been exacerbated by his having to negotiate from Australia.

Musgrove was in England from 1897 to 1900, in time for Tree's Shakespeare at Her Majesty's — *Julius Caesar* in 1898 and *King John* in 1899, which, 'splendid' as they were, according to George C. D. Odell, 'were eclipsed by the magic of *A*

² Michael R. Booth, *Victorian Spectacular Theatre* (London: Routledge, 1981), p. 58.

³ Cited in Viola Tait, *A Family of Brothers* (Melbourne: Heinemann, 1971), p. 66.

Midsummer Night's Dream in 1900'.⁴ Up in Manchester, Courtneidge had been developing enough magic with the *Dream* in 1898 to make a new production worthwhile in 1901. And in 1903 it was this that he took to Australia for Musgrove. It was lavish English Shakespeare, transported to the Antipodes — the costumes, the scenery, and the principal actors and several other cast. He also brought *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*, which followed the very successful seven-week run of the *Dream*. It was Musgrove's answer to his former partner, now archrival, J. C. Williamson, who had presented a Shakespeare season in Melbourne in 1902 with what was billed as a 'New English Dramatic Company' (poster, author's collection) despite being led by an American actress, Janet Waldorf; the plays were *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night*, and *The Merchant of Venice*.

Musgrove's production was remembered in 1921 by a reviewer in the *West Australian* (22 November, p. 8) who had been to see the Allan Wilkie company performing the *Dream* in the gardens of Government House in Perth. There, he said,

Nature herself was the scene-painter, the curtain controller, and the predominating factor in the artistic setting of a play which is, histrionically, the parallel of 'Alice in Wonderland' in literature. [...] There have been several notable presentations of this fairy comedy in Australia, perhaps the most notable was that given at the Princess Theatre in Melbourne some twenty years ago, in which mechanical devices and electric agencies 'in excelsis' were profusely employed. But, considered by the standards of sympathetic influence, the purely natural scenario of last night's presentation seemed preferable to the perfection of artificiality.

Is the critic being generous, one wonders, or is he signalling a real shift in taste? Allan Wilkie, an Englishman who had worked with Ben Greet, Frank Benson, and Beerbohm Tree, formed the first Australian Shakespearean company in 1920.⁵ By the time he was forced to end it in October 1930, he had travelled thousands of miles throughout Australia and New Zealand and produced twenty-seven of the plays, an extraordinary record; the *Dream* was among the most popular half dozen in his repertoire. Mendelssohn's music was played, local children were recruited as fairies, and Bottom was usually praised as one of Wilkie's best parts. The Hobart *Mercury* considered him as being 'seen to advantage as the jovial, if thick-headed, Bottom' (27 December 1921, p. 2). The *West Australian* commented that Bottom,

⁴ George C. D. Odell, *Shakespeare from Betterton to Irving*, 2 vols (New York: Dover, 1966), II, 453.

⁵ See Alan Brissenden, 'Shakespeare's Australian Travels', in *Shakespeare and Cultural Traditions*, ed. by Tetsuo Kishi, Roger Pringle, and Stanley Wells (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1994), pp. 205–15.

‘played by Mr Wilkie with excellently humorous appreciation, looms up after all as the largest personality, the most individual development of the piece’. With Wilkie as leading man, the rehearsal and performance of ‘Pyramus and Thisbe’ became the focus of the production, and the play-within-the-play was extended with comic business. Wilkie’s son, Douglas, recalled that in country towns particularly the play scene would be stretched out as long as possible, at the expense of the lovers’ scenes.

That was against Wilkie’s announced usual practice, which was to use as full a text as he could, in contrast to the truncated texts necessitated by elaborate productions like those of Musgrove and Oscar Asche, who had a four-week Melbourne season of the *Dream* in 1913. Wilkie aimed for clarity of speech and fast movement of scenes, and both these aspects of production remain with those who remember him. Journeying by train and ship with a company of thirty, he needed to be ingenious with sets and properties. In his unpublished autobiography, Wilkie wrote,

I had devised a simplified system of staging whereby, instead of dividing the play into the arbitrary five acts, I produced it in two parts with one interval only of eight minutes. [...] With the use of curtains and tapestries, a few backcloths and a number of set pieces, aided by judicious lighting I was able to get quite beautiful pictorial effects and all that Shakespeare demands to localise the scene and aid the imagination. Apart from the fact that the plays are so constructed and written as to demand an uninterrupted movement, which is nullified by frequent and long breaks in the action, it has to be realized that the leisured days when people did not object to four long entractes of ten to fifteen minutes have passed.⁶

Although his idol in acting was Irving, Wilkie’s theoretical models here are William Poel and Harley Granville-Barker, and it is relevant that his costume designer, Arthur Goodsall, had worked with Poel. The novelty of Wilkie’s methods was remarked on both academically and in the press. Writing in the *Shakespearean Quarterly*, a journal founded by Wilkie in 1922, G. C. Henderson, professor of history at Adelaide University, commented,

his method of staging the plays would seem to indicate a desire to return to the simple conditions of the Elizabethan stage — not in all respects, for that would be indiscreet; and not precipitately, for that would be risking too much for the present [...]. Meantime, good work has been done by rejecting elaborate and expensive scenery, and preserving the continuity of the action by a succession of scenes without intervals.⁷

⁶ Allan Wilkie, ‘All the World my Stage: The Reminiscences of a Shakespearean Actor-Manager in Five Continents’, MS, [(?)1944, rev. (?)1959], p. 254, Folder 5, Wilkie Papers, Barr Smith Library, University of Adelaide.

⁷ G. C. Henderson, ‘Shakespeare and the Stage’, *Shakespearean Quarterly*, 1 (1922), 9–10.

Reviewing *The Winter's Tale*, which opened the Adelaide season of 1924,⁸ the critic of the *Advertiser* perceptively remarked,

Mr Wilkie has led Australian audiences to a true appreciation of the great dramatist's work, as apart and distinct from the mere spectacular in theatrical art. There is an Elizabethan simplicity about his productions which, while giving a fitting and artistic background to the plays, allows the audience to devote attention to the text rather than a succession of pictures which, however richly colored and beautifully posed, are in the end mere pageantry. On Saturday it was evident that Mr Wilkie and his company [...] have evolved a new Shakespearean school, of which Australia has been the birthplace. The 'spacious times' of Queen Elizabeth were apparent in the lines of the play, but the natural method of delivery brought them home to the present age with undeniable force. (18 February 1924, p. 10)

If the claim that Australia was the birthplace of a new style of Shakespearean production is ill informed, the realization that simpler staging allowed the text to emerge more clearly was right on the mark and must have pleased Wilkie immensely. It certainly helped fix the plays in the minds of thousands of school-children who made up a great part of the audiences. So far as the *Dream* was concerned, however, the text which eventually resulted may be judged by a review in the *Adelaide News*, which said that the play

was presented to a crowded house, which appreciated to the full the rollicking humour of the players and the grace and daintiness of the fairy revels. The setting for the play was appropriate and artistic, its action ran smoothly to its appointed end, and the house rocked with mirth at the antics of the court in 'Pyramus and Thisbe' and smiled audibly at the mischievousness of Puck. (21 February 1924, p. 2)

Puck was played by a female, but Wilkie restored a male Oberon, as Oscar Asche had done.

If Wilkie achieved simplicity in staging and sacrificed romance for humour, thirty years later John Alden turned back to Victorian spectacle, via Tyrone Guthrie. In 1937 Guthrie directed at the Old Vic what Robert Speaight called a 'fully-fairied *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Mendelssohn restored to the throne, Robert Helpmann's Oberon and Vivien Leigh's Titania making what Guthrie described as a "nice noise" and an exquisite pattern of shimmering movement — a flagrantly Victorian fantasy'.⁹ It was a long-delayed reply to Granville-Barker, and it looked back to Charles Kean and his ninety dancing fairies in 1856. John Alden, born in

⁸ This production of *The Winter's Tale*, in which Wilkie's wife, Frideswyde Hunter-Watts, played both Hermione and Perdita, was the first in Australia for over forty years.

⁹ Robert Speaight, *Shakespeare on the Stage* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1973), p. 157.

Taree, New South Wales, in 1907, had worked at the Old Vic and in English stock companies from 1937 to 1941, when he returned to Australia and played Lysander for J. C. Williamson in a production which still had a female Puck. He directed Shakespeare for the Independent Theatre in Sydney in 1948, formed his own Shakespearian company in 1950, the first since Allan Wilkie's, and went fully professional at the end of 1951, touring for Williamson. The tenor of Alden's *Dream* may be gauged from a flyer for the 1952 Christmas season at Melbourne's Comedy Theatre, where it was described as 'Shakespeare's hilariously funny and exquisitely beautiful fairy comedy. [...] this is the ideal play for this time of year, because it has so many features for children as well as adults. No child, of any age, can fail to react to the rollicking comedy of Bottom, the weaver, and his merry clowns; the fairy King and Queen, Oberon and Titania, and that mischievous elf — Puck'. One reviewer called this *Dream* 'a most gracious Shakespearian pantomime, a sweetly happy revel', but added, 'the present company sometimes achieves a brittle magic along with the warm fun'. In keeping with the pantomime aspect, the show was considered 'pretty, even spectacular, both in scenery and costumes'.¹⁰ Alden was Bottom, Oberon was played rather tongue-in-cheek by Max Oldaker, Australia's greatest musical comedy star of the 1940s, and Neva Carr-Glynn, a leading radio and stage star, was a somewhat blowsy Titania in voluminous white crinoline, attended by nine fairies, the same number that surrounded Kathleen Michael at Stratford in 1949. Piquantly, Hippolyta was acted by Nancye Stewart, the daughter of Nellie Stewart and George Musgrove. She was then nearing sixty. Special ballets, 'original, brilliantly arranged ballets', according to the handbill, were choreographed by Joyce Graeme, who had stayed in Australia after the 1947–49 tour of Ballet Rambert, of which she was a principal. In his program note, Alden wrote

Although nominally set in Athens, the play is wholly English, and the problem confronting a producer is how to dress it. [...] In this present production we chose to adopt an early Victorian line — the sort of performance the young Queen Victoria might have witnessed. Very English with Athenian touches! Actually many of the styles of the day followed a Grecian line, so we feel it fits rather well. It certainly is in keeping with the Mendelssohn music.

The company was almost completely Australian, though several of the actors had had English experience. But no one could have said that Alden had evolved 'a new Shakespearean school'. Rather, Alden had regressed, reproducing the style of the English conservative school epitomized by the 1954 Michael Benthall production in which the Old Vic and dancers of the Sadler's Wells Ballet combined in a

¹⁰ C. de Boehme, *The News* (Adelaide), 28 April 1952, p. 2.

spectacular show with Helpmann again as Oberon, the ballerina Moira Shearer as Titania, Stanley Holloway as Bottom, and Mendelssohn's music played by a sixty-piece orchestra. Jay Halio has remarked that 'Although audiences loved [Benthall's production], more astute critics regarded the production as a gross anachronism'.¹¹ Alden's was necessarily more modest, but the aims were similar. It also showed what R. A. Foakes has called 'the remarkable strength of a theatrical tradition of treating the play as opera and as spectacular entertainment for children'.¹² Twenty-one years later, the touring production of Peter Brook's *Dream* opened the new Adelaide Festival Theatre. Its reverberations are still resounding in Australian Shakespeare, as they are elsewhere in the world.

And less than ten years after that, in 1982, Jim Sharman became director of the State Theatre Company of South Australia. The career of Sharman, who graduated from the National Institute of Dramatic Art in 1965, accelerated when he directed a controversial *Don Giovanni* for the Australian Opera two years later; this led to the musical *Hair* in 1969, followed by *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *The Rocky Horror Show* — all in various cities of the world. In 1971 his colourful *As You Like It*, with Australian accents, perspex props, rock music, and a Touchstone on rollerskates, was celebrated by some critics, castigated by others, and cheered by predominantly young audiences. Meanwhile John Bell was beginning his exciting experiments at the Nimrod Theatre, which he had established with Ken Horler in 1970, developing Shakespeare with definitely Australian voices — in the case of a memorable *Much Ado About Nothing*, with Australo-Italian voices. Bell went on to found his own Shakespeare company, for which he both acted and directed, in 1990.

Jim Sharman chose the *Dream*, which remains his favourite Shakespeare play, to open his term as State Theatre Company director. It suited the time and the structure of the company, modelled on the lines of an Elizabethan theatre company, with glances at the Berliner Ensemble. With only thirteen actors, doubling became a necessity. At the pull of a string in the front of their clothes the Workers, as the mechanicals were known, sprouted folded silver-paper wings and became the fairies. Melissa Jaffa in grey dress suit was Philostrate and Puck, an androgynous master of ceremonies in both worlds; Geoffrey Rush played a Ruritanian Theseus and an aristocratic, rather chilling Oberon; Gillian Jones was an exceedingly glamorous Hippolyta in yards of Fortuni pleated gold tissue, and an intense, sensuous

¹¹ Jay Halio, *A Midsummer Night's Dream, Shakespeare in Performance* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), p. 43.

¹² *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, ed. by R. A. Foakes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 24.

Titania. John Woods's Australian worker Nick Bottom had for one reviewer an 'engaging loutish simplicity' (Peter Ward, *Australian*, 10 May 1982, p. 10), and for another 'an engaging sincerity and enthusiasm that wrings the last ounce out of his grotesque cavortings' (Alan Roberts, *Advertiser*, 10 May 1982, p. 26).

In conversation with the author, Sharman has said that the sensuality, duality, and comedy of the *Dream* 'sit comfortably with the Australian ethos' and recounted how some basic ideas for the production derived from an experience in South Australia's Flinders Ranges. Awakened in the small hours by the noises of other guests frolicking in the motel swimming pool, he realized they were the same guests who during the day had been stolidly sitting around talking and drinking. It set him thinking about Shakespearean doubling along the lines of different aspects of the same people: daytime selves and nighttime dream selves, conscious selves and unconscious selves. In the play as produced he didn't want too much variation between the two worlds of Athens and the wood, wanting to appeal to the audience's imagination rather than narrowing it.

Brian Thomson's set, influenced by Piranesi, consisted of a huge staircase which swept down slightly left of centre stage; on the landing was a small harmonium on which Alan John, who doubled appropriately as Flute, played his own successfully weird music for the play. Golden rococo decorations, some of them seeming to crumble away, gave a decadent air. On seeing the play's 1983 revival, reviewer Peter Ward grew quite lyrical, saying 'Once again all the world's a dream on a pearl grey stage that is goldenly melting into a star-studded void' (*Australian*, 27 May 1983, p. 8). Gillian Jones felt that the considerable use of the staircase was able to reflect the play's hierarchical structures and the imposition of authority. One indication of the balance of the production, which used an almost uncut text, is that none of the critics singled out 'Pyramus and Thisbe' or any other one aspect of the play for particular comment. Max Harris, writing in the *Bulletin* (1 June 1982), enthused:

This *MSD* [*sic*] was wholly original in that it wasn't the product of clever stage trickeries. It was an exercise in the timelessness of hallucination. But the triumph, and the startling originality, of Sharman's exercise was that in liberating *A Midsummer Night's Dream* from conventional notions of faery dreamings, Jim also liberated and purified the text. That is, the audience left, not obsessed with the comic and colourful ingenuity of the staging, but with awe and respect for the almost infallible genius of William Shakespeare.

Part of the reason for this, I would suggest, was that the set was open and apparently simple. But as well, this was the first major production of Shakespeare with an Australian accent that many of the audience had seen. When the State Theatre Company had produced the play ten years earlier (interestingly enough with the same doubling pattern) the actors had spoken, acceptedly, with approximated

Royal Shakespeare Company voices, the mechanicals using supposedly amusing mummerset. In 1982 Sharman's *Rulers and Lovers* used normal educated Australian, the Workers broad Australian.

Six years later the broadness was not simply in the accents, but in the acting and presentation of Glenn Elston's outdoor production in the Royal Botanic Gardens in Melbourne. For subsequent revivals the casts included well-known film and television actors. The costumes were modern dress for the mortals and natural colours in leather and cloth, with Indian overtones, for the fairies. The music was Asian-influenced, played by a one-man band. Over the years, the text was adapted in various ways to accommodate local and topical references in the manner of revue. An acting cast of only ten led to doubling, even tripling, of roles and cutting the text to a playing time of one hour and twenty minutes. The audience could arrive early with rugs, food, and drink for a picnic, a helpful fairy sprayed on insect repellent to ward off mosquitoes, and fireworks heralded the arrival of Theseus and Hippolyta by boat across a lake, emerging through a pink mist. The Athens scenes completed, it was everyone up and off to the woods, following a trail of fairy lights 'Over hill, over dale', if not quite 'Thorough bush, thorough briar'. Coloured lighting and smoke machines creating a magical atmosphere, a gymnastic Puck delivering some of his lines hanging by his heels from a tree branch, and a generally athletic cast racing in and out of the surrounding trees presented the play with enormous gusto. Occasionally they even managed some of the poetry. The emphasis, however, was on the comedy. In the 1993 Adelaide revival, for instance, the *Advertiser* critic, Patrick MacDonald, wrote,

The actors who win the audience vividly convey the meaning of Shakespeare's sometimes difficult language through wild expressions and cartoonish gesticulations. Jeanette Cronin's Helena is the most consistently amusing character, an endearing nerd who lives out the twisted logic of her dialogue and uses perfect phrasing to draw raucous laughter from centuries-old lines. (p. 13)

The last two scenes took place back at the lakeside, and 'Pyramus and Thisbe', milked for all its worth and then a bit more, was played on the deck of a horseless four-wheel dray. As Leonard Radic said in the *Age*, 'The performances are not exactly subtle [...]. But while the acting is broad-humoured, it is also highly accessible, being tailored for a general audience rather than the dedicated theatregoer' (21 December 1989, p. 14). The first presentation ran for twelve weeks and drew hundreds of people who had never seen a Shakespeare play.

Elston remarked that 'We live in such a controlled environment these days that it's nice not to be controlled, to be outside and feel the wind, say. Audiences feel a lot freer outside. It's more of an event' (*Advertiser, Magazine* 30 January 1993,

p. 30). His outdoor productions — they included *Twelfth Night* and *Romeo and Juliet* as well as the *Dream* — contributed a particular line to the Australian Shakespeare tradition, their broadness and accessibility at the extreme edge of an Australian stylistic component first perceived, it would appear, in Allan Wilkie's directness and simplicity of staging. Taking *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as the example, Jim Sharman's 1982 production is part of a movement which began in the early 1970s and which developed into the kind of production exemplified by the Bell Shakespeare Company's *Twelfth Night* and *Pericles* (both 1994) and Belvoir Street Company B's *Hamlet* (1994) and *The Tempest* (1993). They are characterized by unelaborate staging, close attention to the text, and speech which is clearly but not defiantly Australian — to slightly rephrase part of that 1924 review of the Allan Wilkie company, 'the natural method of delivery brings home [the lines of the play] with undeniable force'.

The kind of spectacle that characterized earlier productions of the *Dream* such as those by Musgrove, Asche, and Alden has now become the province of ballet and opera. The Australian Ballet added Frederick Ashton's 1964 Royal Ballet version to its repertoire in 1969, Harold Collins choreographed a *Dream* for the Queensland Ballet in 1990, and Barry Moreland's version for the West Australian Ballet premiered in 1991. Baz Luhrmann's 1993 production of Benjamin Britten's opera for the Australian Opera, with lavish British Raj setting and costumes by Catherine Martin and Bill Marron, a hit of the 1994 Edinburgh Festival after its successful Australian season, was revived in 1996. A production of Shakespeare's play in this manner would nowadays surely be regarded, like Michael Benthall's in 1954, as anachronistic.

A different kind of anachronism operated in Noël Tovey's 1997 production of the play for the Sydney Theatre Company, in which the designer Andrew Raymond dressed the court in bleached calico Elizabethan ruffs, doublet, and cutoff trousers, with bare legs and feet, and the spirit world of the wood in more abstract and emblematic costumes in natural colours of flowers, trees, and earth. Tovey, a director, actor, and choreographer of Aboriginal blood who had returned to Australia in 1991 after thirty-three years abroad, used an Aboriginal cast and contextualized the play accordingly. Titania's bower was that flamboyant red flower the waratah, symbolic of eternal love; the wood near Athens became the land of the great creative spirit, the Rainbow Serpent; and a kangaroo and a lyrebird were added to the fairies. Digital projections by Julie Martin provided atmospheric scenic changes above and behind the ochre-coloured set, and Sarah de Jong's music was for didgeridoo, harp, and percussion. This bold appropriation, which nevertheless was, according to John McCallum in the *Australian* (18 September 1997, p. 14),

‘respectful to a fault, with no hint of radical revision or overtly political intent’, marked the first production of a classic play by an all-indigenous cast and generally pleased audiences and critics: ‘this is Shakespeare as he intended — popular, gutsy theatre for the widest audience’, according to Pamela Payne in the *Sun-Herald* (Time Out, 21 September 1997, p. 23); ‘Tovey directs with verve and intelligence. The performances are robust, bounding with life and conviction. Best of all, they tackle the text with uncomplicated good sense and playfulness.’ The text was played virtually intact.

In a program note, Tovey wrote that he would ‘like to thank Shakespeare for writing the perfect play for a company of Aboriginal actors. Little did he know that when he wrote *The Dream*, with its references to spirits, ritual love, and humans being changed into animals, that Aboriginal people had been acting out similar characters in ceremonial rituals since the beginning of The Dreaming’. (The Dreaming ‘was the beginning of all time; it is both past, present and future’.) Australian Shakespeare received a new and distinctive element with this production, which was mounted specifically for the Festival of the Dreaming, a celebration of Aboriginals and the arts.

Jim Sharman has said he hopes that, rather than there being a cultural style, there is an ease with Shakespeare among players and audience, and that there should be a style so simple that the play is released with a minimum of impediments. That description typifies the finest Shakespeare now being produced in Australia. It is thanks to such directors as Sharman himself, John Bell, Gale Edwards, and Neil Armfield that this is the case. And I believe that it can be confidently thought of as an Australian style.

CONTAGIOUS EMULATION: ANTITHEATRICALITY AND THEATRE AS PLAGUE IN *TROILUS AND CRESSIDA*

Darryl Chalk

In his pamphlet of 1587, *A Mirrour of Monsters*, William Rankins identifies players as having a peculiar contaminatory capacity:

[They are] ungratefull vipers [...] whose pleasure as poison spreddeth it selfe into the vaines of their beholders, representing the filthie poole of Avernus which striketh dead those which come within the sente of the same [...] such is the infectious poison of these men, and such danger is it to be neere the view of their vitious exercise.¹

The notion that theatre provoked a kind of spectacular contagion was accentuated in the subtitle of Rankins's pamphlet, which sought to describe '*the manifold vices and spotted enormities that are caused by the infectious sights of Playes, with the description of the subtile slight of Sathan making them his instruments*'. Rankins's characterization of theatre as an insidious poison, entering and infecting the bodies of the spectators, drew directly on the medical perception that plague was caused by miasma or infected air and was thus a poisonous vapour inhaled by the unsuspecting, or entering the bloodstream through the pores of the victim's skin.² The

¹ William Rankins, *A Mirrour of Monsters* (London, 1587; STC 20699), F1^r.

² On the miasma theory of plague contamination, see Leeds Barroll, *Politics, Plague and Shakespeare's Theatre* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), pp. 93–96. Barroll offers an important consideration of the potential impact of playhouse closure during plague outbreaks on the professional career of Shakespeare and his company. For a discussion of the plague during Shakespeare's lifetime, see F. P. Wilson's seminal study, *The Plague in Shakespeare's London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1927); for a thorough articulation of the paradigmatic shift during the period in the conception of disease from an endogenous to an exogenous phenomenon, and thus to an understanding of pathogens (venomous seeds) as ontological entities external to the body and able to infiltrate through vulnerable pores and orifices, see Jonathan Gil Harris, *Foreign Bodies and the*

reference to lake Avernus, which in ancient Rome was thought to be the entrance to Hades and whose waters were said to produce vile, putrid vapours strong enough to kill birds flying overhead, also invoked plague's terrifying power. The analogy recalled the frequent warnings in plague pamphlets of the time to beware 'stinking pools', which were thought to infect the air with plague's deadly venom.³ Rankins clearly equated the horror of plague with the danger theatre posed to its audiences and, as will be seen throughout this essay, the spectre of plague and its associated evils comprehensively haunted antitheatrical discourse in Renaissance England.

Amongst the astonishing range of rhetorical invective levelled by the opponents of playhouse culture, plague was surely the resounding keynote. Stephen Gosson, recovering playwright turned antitheatrical pamphleteer, likened playgoing to '[sitting] in the chaire of pestilence'.⁴ John Rainolds decried 'how the maners of all spectators commonlie are hazarded by the contagion of theatricall sights'.⁵ For William Prynne, the 'noxious pleasures' of plays were to be shunned, 'lest we being delighted with their pestiferous sweetnesse, should fall into the snares of death'.⁶ Throughout the period, London's playhouses were forced to shut down for protracted and potentially ruinous intervals when plague epidemics raged. But antitheatrical writers suggested an association between theatre and plague that went beyond the restrictions necessitated by the real physical danger of contagion for the throngs of people who flocked to see plays. They insinuated that theatre itself behaved like a plague and was capable of infecting its audience with a disease-like quality. On recurrent occasions in anti-stage criticism theatre was not only likened to the plague but was frequently figured *as* a plague. The recurrence and significance of this curious metaphoric transposition of 'theatre as plague' throughout antitheatrical documentation is the subject of this essay.⁷

Body Politic: Discourses of Social Pathology in Early Modern England (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 20–30.

³ The very first directive in *Especiall Observations in the Last Time of Pestilence* (London, 1625; STC 18760) asks the reader 'To keepe your Houses, Yardes, Backsides, Streetes, and Channells cleane from all standing puddles, [...] and corrupt moistures, which ingender stinking and filthy savours that be noysome, or may breed infection' (B1').

⁴ Stephen Gosson, *Playes Confuted in Five Actions* (London, 1582; STC 12095), B7'.

⁵ John Rainolds, *Th'Overthrow of Stage-Playes* (Middelburg, 1599; STC 20616), X3'.

⁶ William Prynne, *Histrio-Mastix, the Players Scourge, or, Actors Tragoedie* (London, 1633; STC 20464), p. 336.

⁷ The metaphorical connection between theatre and plague in early modern England has previously been suggested by Stephen Mullaney in *The Place of the Stage: License, Play, and Power in*

Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* seems to be aware of the connections between theatre and plague circulating in the culture, and we see an example of a playwright apparently responding to his detractors through the character of Ulysses. The play, which was presumably written and first performed just before or just after the closure of the theatres during the epidemic of 1603, is suffused with disease imagery.⁸ In the famous speech on degree and in his satirical upbraiding of Achilles and Patroclus's imitations of the Greek generals, Ulysses self-consciously replicates and appropriates the antitheatrical identification of theatre as plague, performing a metatheatrical reinscription of oppositional sentiment. Shakespeare appears to subtly advocate contagious theatricality even as he admits that the world, in typical *theatrum mundi* fashion, is utterly consumed by the plague of theatre.

Plague and its Metaphors

Claudine Herzlich and Janine Pierret have suggested that what is most immediately apparent about histories of the plague is the foregrounding of the calculus of suffering: 'Any description of the plague [...] is first and foremost an enumeration of the number of dead.'⁹ Undeniably, from its first appearance in 1347, bubonic plague had a consistently decimating impact on England and the rest of Western Europe for almost four hundred years. For example, in London, some fifteen thousand deaths were attributed to plague during the epidemic of 1593, over twelve percent of the city's population.¹⁰ The great plague of 1603 peaked with an astounding 3035 fatalities in the final week of August.¹¹ Perhaps as a result of the

Renaissance England (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), pp. 49–52; and Michael Neill in *Issues of Death: Mortality and Identity in English Renaissance Tragedy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 22–29. The recurrent figuring of theatre as a plague in antitheatrical discourse has been noted and briefly discussed by Keir Elam, "'In what chapter of his bosom?" Reading Shakespeare's Bodies', in *Alternative Shakespeares*, vol. II, ed. by Terence Hawkes (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 140–63 (pp. 152–59). It is the intention of the present essay to take this connection somewhat further.

⁸ On the significance of the 1603 outbreak for dating *Troilus and Cressida*, see Barroll, *Politics, Plague and Shakespeare's Theatre*, pp. 118–20.

⁹ Claudine Herzlich and Janine Pierret, *Illness and Self in Society*, trans. by Elborg Forster (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), p. 7.

¹⁰ Barroll, *Politics, Plague and Shakespeare's Theatre*, p. 74.

¹¹ Barroll, *Politics, Plague and Shakespeare's Theatre*, p. 105.

sheer weight of such statistics, scholarship in English plague history has been almost entirely dominated by socio-demographic approaches.¹² The extensive research of Paul Slack, for instance, while providing an essential resource for the social and historical impact of plague devastation in England, neglects adequate consideration of the way disease was perceived and constructed.¹³ The aim of the present essay is to address the interrelation between plague and cultural anxiety, and in doing so suggest that the language of the disease could be used to express broader social concerns and particular cultural values, as will be seen in the anti-theatrical identification of theatre-as-plague.¹⁴

Discovered only in 1894, the bacillus responsible for plague is known as *pasteurella pestis* or *yersinia pestis*, primarily an internal parasite of rats.¹⁵ The disease is transmitted to humans by rat fleas that leave their dead hosts seeking nourishment on live humans. Lacking the bacteriological understanding of rat flea-borne

¹² See particularly Charles Mullett, *The Bubonic Plague and England* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1956); J. F. D. Shrewsbury, *A History of the Bubonic Plague in the British Isles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970); *The Plague Reconsidered*, ed. by Paul Slack and others (Matlock: Local Population Studies, 1977); Robert S. Gottfried, *Epidemic Disease in Fifteenth-Century England* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1978).

¹³ See especially Paul Slack, *The Impact of Plague in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985).

¹⁴ In the past few years, there has been a burgeoning interest in the cultural and literary significance of disease in early modern England by critics in this field. See especially Margaret Healy, *Fictions of Disease in Early Modern England* (New York: Palgrave, 2001); Jonathan Gil Harris, *Sick Economies: Drama, Mercantilism and Disease in Shakespeare's England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); and *Disease, Diagnosis and Cure on the Early Modern Stage*, ed. by Stephanie Moss and Kaara L. Peterson (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004). The important works by Healy and Harris in particular have offered substantive considerations of bubonic plague, but each tends to treat plague as one of a myriad of physical ailments — alongside, for example, syphilis, canker, gluttony — afflicting the early modern body and taking on a range of metaphorical resonances. The recent work of Rebecca Totaro, *Suffering in Paradise: The Bubonic Plague in English Literature from More to Milton* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2005), has persuasively argued that bubonic plague itself is rarely considered 'as a constitutive force within early modern culture' (p. 6). This essay shares Totaro's conviction that the bubonic plague attained a quintessential status in the social imaginary of early modern England, more pervasive and encompassing than other diseases and bodily conditions. It is presumed that Ernest B. Gilman's *Plague Writing in Early Modern England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), unavailable at the time of writing, will similarly place bubonic plague as central to early modern attempts to define the meaning of catastrophic illness. None of these works considers the recurrence of plague language in antitheatrical documentation of the period.

¹⁵ Slack, *Impact of Plague*, p. 7.

microorganic bacilli as the real cause of plague, English Renaissance theorists constructed their own explanations as to how plague was caused and transmitted. While the debate about its causation was vigorously contested in the abundance of plague tracts circulated in the period, the competing theories that plague was a material contagion caused by infected air and a form of divine punishment were often held simultaneously by the one individual. This is demonstrated by Thomas Lodge, self-proclaimed 'Doctor in Physicke', who explained the transmission of plague in his treatise of 1603 in the following way:

Contagion, is an evil qualitie in a bodie, communicated unto another by touch, engendring one and the same disposition in him to whom it is communicated. So as he that is first of all attainted or ravished with such a qualitie, is called contagious and infected, [...] This sicknesse of the Plague is commonly engendred of an infection of the Aire, altered with a venomous vapour, dispersed and sowed in the same, by the attraction and participation whereof, this dangerous and deadlie infirmitie is produced and planted in us, which Almighty God as the rodde of his rigour and justice, and for the amendment of our sinnes sendeth downe upon us.¹⁶

Lodge depicted the plague as a 'communicable' entity transmissible from one person to another by mechanisms as ever-present as breath and touch. The characterization of the disease as an 'evil quality' that 'ravishes' and 'attaints' its victims as an example of God's corrective punishment for society's collective sins betrayed an overriding sense of morally inflected fear. Anxiety was also often expressed over the fact that the plague appeared to be selective of its victims, as Nicholas Bownd asked in 1604:

[Why is it that] in the same house, [the pestilence] is upon one, and not upon all the rest, when they all live together, and draw in the same breath, and eat and drinke together, and lodge in the same chamber, yea sometimes in the same bed? What is the cause of this, but that it pleaseth the Lord in his wisdom, for some cause to defend some for a time, and not the rest? Therefore let us beleeve that in these dangerous times God must bee our only defence.¹⁷

The authors of plague tracts were also frequently confounded by the plague's ability to turn life into death with astonishing swiftness, and how the signs of plague, the 'tokens' and 'buboes', appear in some of those who succumb but not in others.¹⁸

¹⁶ Thomas Lodge, *A Treatise of the Plague* (London, 1603; STC 16676), B3^r.

¹⁷ Nicholas Bownd, *Medicines for the Plague* (London, 1604; STC 3439), K2^r.

¹⁸ William Bullein, *A Dialogue Against the Fever Pestilence* (London, 1578; STC 4038), states: 'A comyng forthe like a *Bubos* are signes of those partes from which they doe swel; as example, in the left side, head, neck, flannes, &c. But often tymes the Plague sore will not appere' (D8^v);

Above all, the power of the plague seemed to lay in its ability not only to create death with resounding abundance, but also to cause confusion for those attempting to prevent it. As Thomas Dekker described the pestilence in his pamphlet *The Wonderfull Yeare*, this 'changeable' and 'Cameleon-like sicknes' seemed to be able to seclude its own origins, to move in ways hidden and mysterious, striking randomly and at will.¹⁹ To those observing the development of an epidemic, as Benjamin Spencer wrote in 1625, the plague not only had a 'hidden beginning' but also a 'hidden procession' and only 'the effect [...] was visible, but the invisible operator and operation was hidden from them, and therein they did but guess'.²⁰ Plague thus appeared to work contrary to logic, it followed no linear progression and provided no visible link between cause and effect. Defying logically calculated defences such as the quarantine procedures issued by the state during plague-time, the plague accepted no bounds. Little wonder that a supernatural source was often ascribed to plague even if the approach, as in Lodge's account, was a scientific one. It is here, in the fact that the infinitely small germs that caused plague remained beyond the grasp of Renaissance medical science, that we can begin to understand how plague became a metaphor. This process of the way in which a disease becomes metaphorized has been summarized by Susan Sontag:

Any important disease whose causality is murky, and for which treatment is ineffectual, tends to be awash in significance. First, the subjects of deepest dread (corruption, decay, pollution, anomie, weakness) are identified with the disease. The disease itself becomes a metaphor. Then, in the name of the disease (that is, using it as a metaphor), that horror is imposed on other things. The disease becomes adjectival.²¹

John Taylor, in *The Fearefull Summer: or Londons Calamity* (Oxford, 1625; STC 23754), identifies the fear associated with the fact that the disease was difficult to diagnose: 'A man dares not be sicke although he be: | Let him complaine but of the *stone* or *gout* | The plague hath strooke him, presently, they doubt [...] For to be sicke of any kind of griefe | Would make a man worse welcome than a thiefe [...] This made me, and many more beside, | Their griefes to smother, and their paines to hide' (A8^v–B1^r).

¹⁹ Thomas Dekker, *The Wonderfull Yeare* (London, 1603; STC 6535.5), D3^r.

²⁰ Benjamin Spencer, *Vox Civitatis, or Londons Complaint Against her Children in the Countrey* (London, 1625; STC 23074), C1^{r–v}. Spencer further suggests the secretive selection process of the plague when he states: 'this disease is a culling and a picking out of men, [...] which causeth it to take at the beginning one here, and another halfe a myle off, then leape thither againe, where it was first, and take them away, which at first it left, [...] neither can it be proved, that all these have by any contracting or conventing ever met together, especially since houses were shut up' (B4^v–C1^r).

²¹ Susan Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor and AIDS and its Metaphors* (New York: Doubleday, 1990), p. 58.

Separated from the pathological reality of its own deployment, plague existed only in how it was seen.

In a culture whose mobility was often regulated and population constantly decimated by epidemics, plague generated a series of powerful and pervasive metaphorical associations. Such was the force of general terms like 'plague' and 'pestilence' that they came to denote all epidemic diseases and even other forms of social catastrophe and 'unacceptable' behaviour.²² Widely disseminated throughout early modern society, the rich matrix of language that circulated around these root terms was generally associated with concepts of social disorder, corruptive evil, and moral decay. As Sontag has noted, the *OED* records the use of the metaphorical meaning of 'pestilent', for example, as 'injurious to religion, morals or public peace' (in 1513), and 'pestilential' was used to label anything 'morally baneful or pernicious' (in 1531).²³ A number of variations on 'plague' could be used to describe a person or thing considered corruptive or contagiously wicked: one could behave 'plaguily' or possess a 'plaguy' nature. Geoffrey Hughes has pointed out that the popularity of plague-associated language is further confirmed by the common imprecatory usage of these and other similar words.²⁴ Testimony to the prevalence of metaphorical applications of disease language is the fact that terms such as 'pestiferous' and 'plaguey' were used in their imprecatory sense long before they acquired more precise or specialized medical meanings.²⁵ Consequently, 'the plague became such a fashionable topic in swearing that the emotive use became dominant'.²⁶ The plague thus gained a prominent place in the social imaginary of early modern England.

²² According to the *OED*, both terms were used for identifying 'any malignant disease with which man or beasts are stricken' (in 1526) or 'any infectious disease or epidemic attended with great mortality' (in 1552), but also any 'calamity' or 'divine punishment' (in 1535).

²³ Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor*, p. 58.

²⁴ Geoffrey Hughes, *Swearing: A Social History of Foul Language, Oaths and Profanity in English* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), pp. 189–90. Interestingly, Hughes also confirms that words such as 'pocky', 'pestilential', 'plague', 'pox', 'pest', and 'plaguey' all gathered imprecatory senses around the mid-sixteenth century, which may explain the frequency of their use in this manner in English Renaissance drama.

²⁵ Hughes, *Swearing*, p. 190. Hughes demonstrates that the imprecatory sense of 'pestiferous' (in 1458) precedes the literal (in 1542) by almost a century, and 'plaguey' 'shows a similar anticipation by some thirty years'.

²⁶ Hughes, *Swearing*, p. 190.

Houses of Proteus

To antitheatricalists, theatre seemed to operate via the same illogical mechanisms as the plague. Amongst the continual suggestions in antitheatrical documents — about theatre's ability to corrupt youth, promote idleness, and incite its audience to all manner of inordinate lusts — there is a recurring preoccupation with the problem of identity.

The very idea of acting as mimetic representation or personation — the transformation of a person into someone (or something) they are not — is presented by the theatre's opponents as threatening the symbolic system of distinguishing between sexes and classes. The claim that theatrical representation disrupts divinely ordained categories of difference, transgressing boundaries of class and gender that were perceived as fixed and immutable, underlies much antitheatrical writing. The performance conventions of the theatre meant that, on an almost daily basis, men of low social status wore the clothes of noblemen and boy players were dressed in the clothes of women. To antitheatricalists, such practices transgressed socially instituted boundaries of the self and deviated from the God-given order of things.

Acting was considered such a duplicitous trade that it provoked the perception in antitheatrical writing that players possessed no fixed or stable self. As J. Cocke wrote in 1615, the 'Chiefe essence' of *A common Player* [...] is, *A daily Counterfeit* and 'he is but a shifting companion; for he lives effectually by putting on and putting off'. The players thus gave the impression that their identity was 'compounded of all Natures, all humours, all professions'.²⁷ To work by playing was an anomalous vocation, for it meant making a living by lying and counterfeiting the identities of others. If, as Prynne suggested, people were to 'seeme outwardly that which they were inwardly' and 'to act themselves not others', actors — who were seen as always feigning, never keeping to their own predetermined calling, and always seeming to become other — threatened to disrupt the rigid essence of being and identity deemed crucial to an orderly society.²⁸

For writers like Gosson, it was precisely the putting on of a counterfeit identity that allowed the actor to disrupt divinely ordained categories of difference:

The Law of God very straightly forbids men to put on wome[n]s garments, garments are set downe for signes distinctiue betwene sexe & sexe, to take unto those garments that are

²⁷ Quoted by E. K. Chambers in his *The Elizabethan Stage* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923), IV, 255–57.

²⁸ Prynne, *Hystrio-Mastix*, p. 159.

manifest signes of another sexe, is to falsifie, forge and adulterate, contrarie to the expresse rule of the worde of God.²⁹

Gosson here encapsulates the fear of undifferentiation, of indistinguishable mixture and confusion of identity, observed so often in antitheatrical writing. He identifies costume as the 'sign' which declares one's gender. Forging gender identity through cross-dressing makes categories of difference become mutable, unfixed from what were supposedly strong bindings. The fear of fluid identity was not limited to transgressions of gender difference: in much antitheatrical polemic, it coexists with the fear of social mobility. As Gosson reiterates, the act of representation disrupts categories of both gender and class:

[I]n Stage Playes for a boy to put on the attyre, the gesture, the passions of a woman; for a meane person to take upon him the title of a Prince with counterfeit porte, and traine, is by outwarde signes to shewe them selues otherwise then they are, and so with in the compasse of a lye.³⁰

The cross-class transgressions performed by players were only compounded by the fact that playhouse companies purchased the garments of deceased nobility for costuming characters of higher social rank.³¹

Laura Levine has examined the fear of effeminization evident in antitheatrical documentation, and in particular the claims that the costume of the cross-dressed boy player could actually alter the gender of the male body beneath the costume. She suggests that such a belief in the transformative abilities of theatre projects 'magical' and contradictory ideas about the relationship between the self and acting, and thus, despite their protestations to the contrary, antitheatrical tracts 'appear to revolve around the anxiety that there is no such thing as a stable identity'.³² The antitheatrical crisis identified by Levine is that the mixture of selves, the constant

²⁹ Gosson, *Playes Confuted in Fiue Actions*, E3^v.

³⁰ Gosson, *Playes Confuted in Fiue Actions*, E5^r.

³¹ See Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage 1574–1642*, 3rd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 193–200. As Peter Stallybrass, 'Worn Worlds: Clothing and Identity on the Renaissance Stage', in *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture*, ed. by Margreta de Grazia, Maureen Quilligan, and Peter Stallybrass (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 289–320, has argued: 'Actors were not attacked for their servitude but for their liberties. In so far as they were perceived as "free" men, they were imagined as dangerously transgressive vagrants. Above all they were attacked for shifting liveries' (p. 293).

³² Laura Levine, *Men in Women's Clothing: Anti-theatricality and Effeminization 1579–1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 14.

re-creation and re-presentation of the self performed by players, catalyses a kind of radical cancellation leading to a state of non-identity.³³

A prevalent belief of the antitheatricalists was that theatre encouraged playgoers to imitate what they saw on stage. The danger lay in the possibility that the ‘meaner sort’ who attended performances would attempt to remake themselves by counterfeiting real identities, thereby infecting and dismantling the ‘natural’ and social orders. This points towards a potentially subversive understanding of early modern acting. By showing that it could be counterfeited, the act of representation renders identity reproducible.³⁴ The practice of playing, in this sense, challenged the fixed notions of identity underlying Renaissance notions of the self, and revealed them to be little more than arbitrary constructions.

The Plague’s the Thing

The perceived impact of theatre on the multitudes who gathered to watch and listen in the teeming suburbs of London; the ways in which it supposedly disseminated itself; the way it contaminated morals, corrupted manners, and infected its audience with the ills of self-transformation — all were often likened to the plague in antitheatrical tracts.³⁵ The widely held view that the plague was caused by

³³ For further examinations of cross-dressing and antitheatricality, see Jean E. Howard, *The Stage and Social Struggle in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 93–128; and Stephen Orgel, *Impersonations: The Performance of Gender in the English Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

³⁴ For discussions of the subversive potentiality of Elizabethan acting, see David Scott Kastan, ‘Proud Majesty Made a Subject: Shakespeare and the Spectacle of Rule’, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 37 (1986), 459–75; Franco Moretti, ‘Tragic Form as the Deconsecration of Sovereignty’, in his *Signs Taken for Wonders: Essays in the Sociology of Literary Forms*, rev. edn (London: Verso, 1988), pp. 42–82; Stephen Mullaney, ‘After the New Historicism’, in *Alternative Shakespeares*, vol. II, ed. by Hawkes, pp. 17–37; Louis Montrose, *The Purpose of Playing: Shakespeare and the Cultural Politics of the Elizabethan Theatre* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); and Bryan Reynolds ‘The Devil’s House, “or worse”: Transversal Power and Antitheatrical Discourse in Early Modern England’, *Theatre Journal*, 49 (1997), 143–67.

³⁵ This essay explores similar territory to Tanya Pollard’s important study, *Drugs and Theater in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), which examines the pathological and transformative power of theatre in the period. Pollard gathers convincing evidence that theatre is repeatedly figured as a narcotic force, with potentially poisonous and curative efficacy, in both the debate surrounding the stage and in plays. While the discussion occasionally hints at notions of contagion and infection (see especially her reading of face painting in Barnaby Barnes’s

infected air and could thus be spread via the breath of the contaminated only added to the apparently contagious quality of theatre. In 1564, Edmund Grindal, then bishop of London, suggested that the playgoers literally took their 'infection' from the 'impure mouths' of the players.³⁶ The contagiousness of the players' foul breath in this instance is synonymous with the foul language and ideas carried by it: disease here becomes a communicable entity in a sense remarkably similar to Antonin Artaud's suggestion that the plague is communicable.³⁷ In the entire corpus of antitheatrical writing, repeated references to the 'pestering up' of the liberties by the confluence of playgoers, and their being 'pestered' close together while watching plays,³⁸ draws little differentiation between the pestilence itself and

The Devil's Charter, pp. 81–100), Pollard does not consider the prevalence of the plague in the antitheatrical attack on the stage. The present essay sits alongside but also extends Pollard's argument suggesting that according to the antitheatricalists, the players and playgoers were not only poisoned or altered by the potential narcotic danger of playing, they were also infected with the plague of theatricality, turned into a contagious vector, unwittingly spreading the affliction with an alacrity that threatened to consume the populace in a histrionic pandemic. This metaphoric association between theatre and lethal epidemic disease is arguably a more potent and pervasive anxiety underlying the debates about the impact of the stage, one recognized by antitheatricalists and playwrights alike.

³⁶ Grindal states: 'ther is no one thing off late is more lyke to have renewed this contagion, then the practise off an idle sorte off people, [...] I meane these Histriones, common playours; who now daylye, butt speciallye on holydayes, sett vp bylles, whervnto the youthe resorteth excessively, & ther taketh infection: besydes that goddes worde by theyr impure mowthes is prophaned, and turned into scoffes' (cited in Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, IV, 267).

³⁷ Indeed, the accusations about the contagiousness of imitation that are reiterated throughout antitheatrical discourse seem to be at least indirectly replicated in his conception of theatre-as-plague in Antonin Artaud, *The Theatre and its Double*, trans. by Mary Caroline Richards (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1958). Artaud suggests that the plague, like theatre, is a 'palpable communication' (p. 17); and later, in a similar manner to many Renaissance theorists, rejects the scientific understanding of material contagion: 'Whatever the aberrations of historians or doctors on the subject of plague, I think one can subscribe to a notion of the malady as a kind of psychic entity not transmitted by any virus. If you wanted to analyse closely all the facts about pestilential contagion that are presented in historical narratives and memoirs, you would have a hard job to isolate a single verifiable case of infection by contact' (p. 18). Artaud's conception of plague and theatre as psychic maladies infecting both actor and spectator, participant and observer, is astonishingly comparable to the antitheatrical argument that theatre afflicted the mind, soul, and being of the spectator and that the contagion was spread by sight and imitation.

³⁸ For example, in a city precept of 1569 (Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, IV, 267) the anonymous author complains of 'great multitudes of people [...] being close pestered together in small rooms', at the inns and playhouses situated in the liberties; a later anonymous letter proclaims,

the pestilence of theatre. The connection between plague as divinely sent punishment and the theatres is also a common theme in antitheatrical discourse. While the Lord Mayor and others often refer to theatre causing plague by provoking God's wrath,³⁹ a sermon given by Thomas White in 1577 epitomizes the view. Referring to the practice of closing theatres in time of plague, he states:

I like the pollicye well if it holde still, for a disease is but bodged or patched up that is not cured in the cause, and the cause of plagues is sinne, if you looke to it well: and cause of sinne are playes: therefore the cause of plagues are playes.⁴⁰

Such simplistic deductions were not, however, the full extent of accusations regarding the correlation between theatre and plague in antitheatrical discourse.

Rankins's identification of the deadly infection which the very sight of theatre apparently provoked also showed a preoccupation in antitheatrical discourse with the *effect* theatrical spectacles had on their audiences. Antitheatricalists often singled out the peculiar sinfulness of theatre from other activities regarded as evil. Anthony Munday, in *A Second and Third Blast of Retrait from Plaies and Theaters*, characterized theatre as the only sinful activity that pollutes both the doer and the beholder:

Againe, al other euils pollute the doers onlie, not the beholders, or the hearers. For a man may heare a blasphemers, and not be partaker of his sacriledge, inasmuch as in minde he dissenteth. And if one come while a roberie is a doing, he is cleere, because he abhors the fact. Onlie the filthiness of plaies, and spectacles is such, as maketh both the actors & beholders giltye alike. For while they saie nought, but gladlie looke on, they al by sight and assent *be actors*.⁴¹

In contrast to other illicit pursuits, theatre has the ability not only to implicate the spectator in the sin being observed but, in the act of watching, transform playgoers into participants, 'actors' in the wicked 'spectacle'. Crucially, this transference of sin between actor and spectator occurs 'by sight', which hints at a kind of bodily

'Woe is me! The play howses are pestered, when churches are naked' (p. 304). See the 'Documents of Control' section in Chambers, especially pp. 267–322, for repeated suggestions that such a problem was directly related to the cause and spread of plague and infection in the city.

³⁹ Chambers cites a Privy Council Act sent in reply to a petition of 1584 forwarded by 'the Queen's Players', which states: 'To play in playetime is to increase the plague by infection: to play out of playetime is to draw the plague by offendings of God upon occasion of such playes' (*The Elizabethan Stage*, IV, 301).

⁴⁰ Cited in Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, IV, 197.

⁴¹ Anthony Munday, *A Second and Third Blast of Retrait from Plaies and Theaters* (London, 1580; STC 21677), p. 3 (emphasis added).

penetration often made explicit in antitheatrical discourse. Rankins's pamphlet figured the spectators as beholders made vulnerable to infection by watching and endangered by being within *sight* ('neare the view') of the players' 'vicious exercise'. After all, it was the 'infectious sights' of plays that his subtitle suggested caused 'manifold vices and spotted enormities' — disease spots. Munday wrote of the entrance of 'filthie things' into the body through the ears and eyes of the beholders:

There co[m]meth much euil in at the eares, but more at the eies, by these two open windowes death breaketh into the soule. Nothing entereth more effectualie into the memorie, than that which commeth by seeing [...] the tokens of that which wee haue seene [...] sticke faste in vs whether we wil or no.⁴²

In this commonplace notion that the senses are the windows to the soul, the ears and eyes become permeable orifices through which the theatre infiltrates its spectators. The fact that they are then 'stuck fast', as if tainted, with the 'tokens' of what has been witnessed also uses the common name for plague sores: 'tokens'.

As the above examples attest, the body of the spectator in the playhouse is at risk of being invaded by the infection of theatre. Like the body in the bathhouse, the playgoers' dalliance with the scopophilic pleasure of theatre opens all pores and orifices, leaving them virtually defenceless against infiltration. To antitheatricalists, the theatre launches a violent sensory assault on the bodies of its beholders: penetrating their eyes, corrupting their ears, permeating their skin, piercing their hearts, insinuating itself into their minds, and polluting their souls with poisonous illness. Antitheatrical discourse thus not only employs the language of plague as a means of making people fear theatre as much as they fear pestilence: the theatre is itself metaphorized as plague-like.

If spectators leave the playhouse infected with a disease as deadly as the plague, what then is the nature of their illness? The danger of theatrical contagion seems to lie predominantly in the threat of repetition, of emulation. As the title of Rankins's pamphlet implies, actors are 'monsters' and the spectators who gaze into this 'mirrour' expose themselves to the danger of becoming like them: they, too, will become the 'instruments' of 'Sathan'. Munday similarly attests to the threat of transformation: 'Manie of nature honest, and tractable, haue bene altered by those shewes and spectacles, and become monstrous.'⁴³ Since the potential victim was senseless of the disease that had infiltrated their body, even the good of heart, honest of nature, and sound of mind were at risk. Gosson too suggests that the playgoer

⁴² Munday, *A Second and Third Blast of Retrait*, pp. 95–96.

⁴³ Munday, *A Second and Third Blast of Retrait*, p. 93.

is contaminated with theatricality merely by watching the player's imitation of vice. Purporting to expose 'the effects this poison works among us', he alleges:

[T]hey that came honest to a play, may depart infected. [...] [No] corruptio[n] can be greater, the[n] th[at] which is daily bred by plaies, because th[e] expressing of vice by *imitation*, brings vs by the shadow, to the substance of the same.⁴⁴

The transmission of this histrionic syndrome, and the charge that playgoers did not merely enjoy 'honest' recreation at the theatres but were unwittingly polluted with the means to re-create themselves, occurs through 'imitation' — acting is figured as a kind of infection, 'bred' by contagion.

In *Th'Overthrow of Stage-Playes*, John Rainolds emphatically characterizes the actor's representation of a dramatic role as a means of catching an infection, when he suggests:

How much greater outrage of wickedness and iniquitie are [...] the players them selves likely to fall into? Seeing that diseases of the mind are gotten far sooner by counterfainting, then are diseases of the body: [...] diseases of the body may [also] be gotten so, as appeareth by him, who, faining for a purpose that he was sick of the gowte, became (through care of couterfeiting it) gowtie in deede. So much can imitation [...] doe. (D2^v)

The idea that actors are infected by their roles and then pass this affliction onto the spectators is reiterated several times in Rainolds's tract. He singles out teaching the craft of acting as dangerous, because in acting 'The venom and poison whereof goeth about to spread it selfe abroad through more parts of your body [...] by meanes that you likewise instill the same humour [...] into the rest of your players, their teachers and instructors, and in conclusion your whole house' (E4^v–F1^r). Later, he reveals a sense of anxiety over the ill effects the rigorous process of learning acting must inevitably have on the players, a condition which cannot help but be passed on to the playgoers:

[The players] whose mindes in what danger they are of infection, by meditating and studying sundrie dayes, or weekes, how to expresse the manners of wantons, or drunkards, or country-woopers lively, the feeling whereof played but an hower, or two, might taint the spectators. (Q1^v)

Roleplaying is again rendered as a kind of psychic malady that infects actor and spectator alike. In order to illustrate just how dangerous such processes can be, Rainolds cites an instance from classical Greece, where after a performance of Euripides' *Andromeda* many who had been present fell sick with a 'burning ague' which confined them to bed for seven days. When they resurfaced, believing they

⁴⁴ Gosson, *Playes Confuted in Fiue Actions*, G4^{r-v} (emphasis added).

had recovered, they found themselves afflicted with a peculiarly theatrical syndrome since, as Rainolds recounts,

[They] did fall into a strange distemper and passion of a light phrensie. The which exciting them to say & cry aloude such things as were sticking freshly in their memorie, and had affected moste their minde, they grewe all to Tragedie-playing, and full lustily they sounded out Iambicall speeches [...] So that the whole citie was full of pale and thinne folke, pronouncing like stage-players, and braying with a loude voice. (Q1^v)

The spectators here are thus infected with the theatricality of what they have witnessed, afflicted by roleplaying in the same way the players are. The contagion spreads, ultimately enveloping the whole city in a theatrical epidemic. Playhouse culture is thereby metaphorized in Rainolds's tract as plague-like in its mode of transmission and physically infective quality.

Once infected, the spectators then spread the theatrical contagion to the rest of the populace, as William Prynne believed. Those who resort to plays are 'contagious in quality, more apt to poison, to infect all those who dare approach them, than one who is full of plague-sores'.⁴⁵ In another more detailed statement Prynne writes of a society of 'Play-haunters' whom he describes as 'Lewde companions [that] are of a most infectious, leprous, captivating ensnaring qualitie [...] they will quickly corrupt all those who entertaine their friendship [...] making them as [...] vitious as themselves'.⁴⁶ Like the victim of a vampire, the 'vitiated' spectator then becomes a vector, a conduit, by which the disease can be transmitted to others. The players, through their playgoing minions, thus become the source of a deadly theatrical outbreak. The 'pestiferous poison' of the playhouses creates 'contagious persons' who then blight the city of London and the entire countryside with a plague.⁴⁷ This spectacular pandemic is invoked by Prynne when he substantiates his claims by telling how the entire nation is 'infected' with a veritable army of 'lawlesse, godlesse persons, who now swarme thicke of late in the streetes of our Metropolis'.⁴⁸ Such examples demonstrate the way in which playing and plague became

⁴⁵ Prynne, *Histrio-Mastix*, p. 152.

⁴⁶ Prynne, *Histrio-Mastix*, p. 149.

⁴⁷ Prynne, *Histrio-Mastix*, pp. 418, 149.

⁴⁸ Prynne, *Histrio-Mastix*, p. 500. Like Philip Stubbes before him, who painstakingly catalogued the plague of abuses afflicting England at the time, Prynne includes in his list of the people that make up this pandemic such histrionic personages as Roarers, Cheaters, Fashion-mongers, and Fantastiques. The 'food by which they live, they grow, and multiply [...] the meanes by which they roote and spred themselves' is of course none other than 'mind-corrupting, manner-depraving Stage-plays' (ibid., p. 500).

synonymous in antitheatrical discourse. There is a clear metaphorical association in this rhetoric between the supposed disseminatory powers of the theatre, a perceived ability to transfer its 'enormities' and have its transformations replicated by its audience, and the morally bound, material infection that was the plague.

Contagion and Undifferentiation

The identification of theatre as the cause of plague in antitheatrical discourse and its perceived capacity for material infection are bound up with the problematic of representation itself: the confusion of divinely ordained categories of difference. Plague as metaphor has produced crises of identity throughout history. René Girard argues that the plague has generally been 'presented as a process of undifferentiation, a destruction of specificities'. He emphasizes the plague's perceived ability to disrupt categories of difference, particularly social hierarchies, 'which are first transgressed, then abolished'. 'The distinctiveness of the plague,' he states, 'is that it ultimately destroys all forms of distinctiveness. [...] All life, finally, is turned into death, which is the supreme undifferentiation.'⁴⁹ The plague was seen as a violent eliminator of difference among the living — young/old, male/female, rich/poor. It effaced all signs of individuality, reducing everything into the undifferentiated mass spectacle of the plague pit.⁵⁰ In *The Seven Deadly Sinnes of London*, Thomas Dekker observed the levelling effect of corpses unceremoniously dumped in the plague pits, in which 'the gallant and the begger lay together; the scholler and the

⁴⁹ René Girard, 'The Plague in Literature and Myth', in his *To Double Business Bound: Essays on Literature, Mimesis and Anthropology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), pp. 136–54 (pp. 136–37).

⁵⁰ Despite its potent recurrence as an image in plague literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the plague pit is an all but forgotten part of the plague's historical narrative. As John J. Joughin has suggested, the fragments of history offered up by the plague pits — coupled with the fact that individuals lie uncommemorated in epitaph and remain only in pieces 'without some trace that is whole' — has meant that they have been generally neglected by historians. Joughin writes: 'For civic historicism, common interment is an unremarkable episode, merely an instalment on the outskirts of the polis.' But he argues that the dead contained in mass graves 'are not altogether without trace' and highlights as remarkable the fact that plague pits 'should amass an indiscriminate *bricolage* of the high and the low'. John J. Joughin, 'Whose Crisis? AIDS/Plague and the Subject of History', in *Uses of History: Marxism, Postmodernism, and the Renaissance*, ed. by Francis Barker, Peter Hulme, and Margaret Iversen (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), pp. 140–52 (p. 142).

carter in one bed'.⁵¹ In antitheatrical discourse, the theatre was also constructed as a dangerous and pernicious eliminator of difference — through its transgressive imitations the theatre threatened to make illegible the visible sartorial signs of distinction that the state was so desperate to maintain as a means of social control.

This facet of antitheatrical argument was drawn from the homily 'An Exhortacion, concernyng Good Ordre and Obedience, to Rulers and Magistrates', which was an attempt by the state to monitor and maintain the delicately balanced social hierarchy of predetermined identity. In promising 'Babylonical' confusion and chaos should anyone decide to step outside of a divinely sanctioned identity, the sermon also frequently employs disease metaphor, primarily in the form of a warning that when the social order is disrupted God will send plagues as a punishment. If degree is 'untuned', 'there must nedes folowe all mischief and utter destruction both of soules, bodies, goodes and commonwealths'.⁵² By way of example, the homily suggests that in the past recalcitrant subjects who have rebelled against the 'natural' order have been severely punished: some 'were sodainly stricken, with a foule leprosy. [...] Other were sore plagued, soo that there was killed in one day, the number of fortene thousand and seven hundred, for rebellion against them, whom God had appointed to be in authoritie'.⁵³ Stephen Gosson forcefully restates the argument of this homily in his attack against the stage, reiterating that it is God's command that each person abide in the calling they were given at birth in order to maintain the mutually constitutive harmony of society. Following the homily, he employs the organic political analogy of the social order as a body:

A common weale is likened to the body, whose heade is the prince, in the bodie: if any part be idle, by participation the damage redoundeth to the whole, if any refuse to doe their due tie, though they be base, as the guttes, the gall, the bladder, howe daungerous it is both to the bodie, and to the heade, euerie man is able to coniecture.⁵⁴

Certainly most people would have heard this rhetoric from the homily itself when it was preached to them from the pulpit at sermons. The conjunction of disorder and plague in the homily, along with the warning of a god-sent pestilence, is repeated by Gosson when he states of the role of changing clothes in playing:

⁵¹ Thomas Dekker, *The Seuen Deadly Sinnes of London* (London, 1606; STC 6522), G1^v.

⁵² *Elizabethan Backgrounds: Historical Documents of the Age of Elizabeth I*, ed. by Arthur F. Kinney (Hamden: Archon, 1975), p. 61.

⁵³ *Elizabethan Background*, ed. by Kinney, p. 67.

⁵⁴ Gosson, *Playes Confuted in Fiue Actions*, G6^r.

We are commaunded by God to abide in the same calling wherein we were called, which is our ordinary vocation in a commonweale. [...] if priuat men be suffered to forsake theire calling because they desire to walke gentleman like in sattine and veluet, w[ith] a buckler at their heeles, proportion is so broken, vnitie dissolued, harmony confounded, th[at] the whole body must be dismembred and the prince or the heade can not chui[s]e but sicken. [...] God is just, his bow is bent & his arrowe drawn, to send you a plague if you staye too long.⁵⁵

Gosson refers to the practice of players, as masterless men, dressing and behaving like nobility in their staged impersonations. The statement recapitulates the connections between plague, theatre, and the disruption of categories of identity difference, but re-presents them as an attack on the very fabric of the social order: theatre causes chaos and confusion which leads to plague. A state in disorder is likened to a diseased body, and the trope of infection, here imagined as an epidemic of roleplaying, is something that works its way up the social order threatening its head — the monarch.

As forms of contagious impertinence, the theatrical practices of costuming and cross-dressing preoccupied commentators like Gosson. His criticism of those who would assume the identity of the gentry, strutting the stage in 'sattine and veluet', immediately defined the core corruption of theatre. Roleplaying was 'unitie dissolved' and social 'harmony confounded'. It was also a brazen assault on the cosmic chain of being, which would attract God's 'arrowe'. The dissembling quality of costume and clothing, the sickening inversion of social identity, and the presumption of 'low vagabond' to assume the public place of nobility — these elements of theatre were entirely consistent with both Girardian and period observations of plague's dramatic ability to reverse fortunes. As Girard wrote, 'The plague will turn the honest man into a thief, the virtuous man into a lecher, the prostitute into a saint. [...] Riches are showered upon paupers who inherit in a few days the fortunes of many'.⁵⁶ And Thomas Dekker's *Newes From Graues-end* glossed the point thus: 'one, who in the morne with gold' suddenly finds 'The Begger now above him; | So he that yesterday was clad | In purple robes' finds his identity robbed, lost, and circulating in the sphere of underclass culture.⁵⁷

The perception of fluid identities as no identity at all calls up the erasures of the plague pit. Costume is not only interchanging, it is levelling — a 'plaguy' carnivalesque, potentially without end, which terminally (like death) confounds social

⁵⁵ Gosson, *Playes Confuted in Fiue Actions*, G6^r–G7^r, G8^r.

⁵⁶ Girard, 'The Plague in Literature and Myth', p. 136.

⁵⁷ Thomas Dekker, *Newes from Graues-end* (London, 1604; STC 12199), E3^v–E4^r.

decorum and removes the 'essence' of self. The playhouse, in which lowborn actors donned the liveries of deceased nobility, mimics the levelling impact of the plague pit with as much nonchalant glee as the gravedigger clown in *Hamlet*.

The Plaguey Politics of Troilus and Cressida

The Greek council scene in *Troilus and Cressida* is particularly concerned with notions of order and difference, and we see Ulysses forward a strikingly similar argument to that of Gosson during the debate amongst the Greek commanders. It commences with Agamemnon's famous speech, addressing the much-protracted Grecian victory in the war with Troy as a venture that 'fails in the promised largeness' (I. 3. 4).⁵⁸ In the body of the social order, Agamemnon is constructed as its vital epicentre: 'the nerve and bone of Greece' and the 'heart' of the army that has lain encamped on the Trojan plains seven years (I. 3. 54–55). This is a reverence due his monarchical role and divine authority, his 'godly seat' as Nestor puts it (line 30). The speech itself re-enacts an argument familiar to many playgoers of the time who would have heard its commanding strains before in the Homily on Obedience. Agamemnon, in response to the jaundiced, sickly faces of the Greek commanders perturbed at their lack of success, reiterates the precept that all things and actions are part of a divinely governed cosmological order (I. 3. 1–29). Ulysses' ensuing attempt to explain the prolonged failure of the campaign to overcome Troy is turned into a diatribe against the disorderly state of the camp:

The specialty of rule hath been neglected:
 [...]

The heavens themselves, the planets, and this centre,
 Observe degree, priority and place,
 Infixure, course, proportion, season, form
 Office, and custom, in all line of order;
 And therefore is the glorious planet Sol
 In noble eminence enthroned and sphered
 Amidst the other, whose med'cinable eye
 Corrects the ill aspects of planets evil
 [...]

But when the planets
 In evil mixture to disorder wander,
 What plagues and what portents, what mutiny,

⁵⁸ William Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*, in *Norton Shakespeare*, ed. by Stephen Greenblatt and others (New York: Norton, 1997). All references are to this edition.

What raging of the sea, shaking of earth,
 Commotion in the winds! Frights, changes, horrors,
 Divert and crack, rend and deracinate,
 The unity and married calm of states,
 Quite from their fixture! (I. 3. 77–101)⁵⁹

Ulysses articulates the same precept of a cosmological order seen in the Homily on Obedience and presumed in Agamemnon's speech, and he unveils a similar anxiety about the possibility of a social order remaining fixed. The Homily promised that rebellion would only result in the destabilization of 'good and necessary' order: 'For where there is no right ordre, there reigneth all abuse, carnal libertie, enormitie, synne and Babilonical confusion.'⁶⁰ In the Ptolemaic system with the earth as centre and the sun as an orbiting planet, this cosmological order relies on planets to keep their respective place. If the planets should wander (the word 'planets' means 'wanderers') and cross paths, the unitary, fixed sense of order collapses and universal chaos reigns. The sense of order in earthbound states matches the relationship between order and disorder in the universe. The social order of a state in rebellion, one that is not ruled correctly and in which the respect due to authority is not observed by individual subjects, becomes easily disordered and uprooted from its unifying purpose.

Significantly, plague is figured as the absolute antithesis to order in Ulysses' speech, just as it is in both the Homily and antitheatrical discourse. Pestilential chaos results when the sun's 'med'cinable eye' fails to correct the 'ill aspects' of 'evil' planets, and the metaphor of disease underscores Ulysses' rhetoric throughout his exposition. The maintenance of the 'married calm' of states clearly relies on a strict observance of the hierarchical stratification of degrees:

O when degree is shaken,
 Which is the ladder of all high designs,
 The enterprise is sick. How could communities,
 Degrees in schools, and brotherhoods in cities,
 Peaceful commerce from dividable shores,

⁵⁹ Girard has noted that the correlation between mimetic contagion and a plague of undifferentiation can be witnessed in Ulysses' famous speech on degree in *Troilus and Cressida*. See 'The Politics of Desire in *Troilus and Cressida*', in *Shakespeare and the Question of Theory*, ed. by Patricia Parker and Geoffrey Hartman (New York: Routledge, 1985), pp. 188–209. For a Girardian examination of Elizabethan factionalism and undifferentiation in *Troilus and Cressida* and plague in *Hamlet*, see Eric S. Mallin, *Inscribing the Time: Shakespeare and the End of Elizabethan England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

⁶⁰ *Elizabethan Backgrounds*, ed. by Kinney, p. 61.

The primogenity and due of birth,
 Prerogative of age, crowns, scepters, laurels,
 But by degree stand in authentic place?
 Take but degree away, untune that string,
 And hark what discord follows. Each thing meets
 in mere oppugnancy. (I. 3. 101–11)

Ulysses perfectly encapsulates the recurring tropes of antitheatrical discourse: confusion and disruption of social order or unstable identity difference brings plague-like chaos. Like death or plague, the disregard for degree has a levelling effect as ‘each thing meets in mere oppugnancy’. The diversion from degree brings about those same chaotic inversions noted by Girard and Dekker: ‘Strength should be lord of imbecility, | And the rude son should strike his father dead’ (I. 3. 114–15). The anxiety underlying the speech thus combines the fear of undifferentiation and the fear of plague.

Ulysses’ replication of antitheatrical sentiment becomes even more apparent when he suggests that the cause of the disorder infecting the Greek camp is of a theatrical nature. Earlier in his speech, Ulysses argues that disorder comes when social position is counterfeited: ‘Degree being vizarded, | Th’unworthiest shows as fairly in the masque’ (I. 3. 82–83). This recalls the antitheatrical lament over the ‘meaner sorts’ dressing themselves in fine apparel thereby making it impossible to distinguish between master and servant, noble and slave: the very distinctions necessary to upholding the delicate harmony of the social order. He later describes the recent activities of Achilles and Patroclus, two of the Greek generals. The audience is told that in Achilles’ tent Patroclus has been staging impersonations of his fellow generals. Ulysses depicts the ‘put[ting] on’ of Greek leader Agamemnon’s ‘topless deputation’ as the most disrespectful of the impersonations (lines 151–52). Achilles is portrayed as the idle spectator ‘lolling’ on his ‘pressed bed’ (line 162) who is lured into dalliance by Patroclus’s scurrilous spectacles, recalling the rhetorical strategies employed by the antitheatricalists. In particular, this idea emulates the argument that theatre both promoted and seduced its audience into idleness, substituting ‘playing’ for working. Ulysses argues that it is Achilles’ pride that makes him keep his tent and promotes his penchant for the sins of theatrical pleasure. Achilles’ and Patroclus’s disruption of the social order through the ills of representation sets a precedent that will disseminate along the chain of degree with plague-like contagion. As Ulysses suggests:

And this neglecton of degree it is
 That by a pace goes backward in a purpose
 It hath to climb. The general’s disdained
 By him that’s one step below; he, by the next,

That next by him beneath. So every step,
 Exemplified by the first pace that is sick
 Of his superior, grows to an envious fever
 Of pale and bloodless emulation. (I. 3. 127–34)

Achilles and Patroclus are the first stage of an infectious sickness that will provoke a theatrical epidemic. Gosson's metaphor of the 'dismemberment' of the body politic is echoed in such a statement. As the mimetic contagion works its way down the social ladder, the threat to order and rule, like plague, works its way upward since the epidemic of 'neglection of degree [...] goes backward in a purpose | It hath to climb' (lines 129–31). Ulysses later reiterates that Achilles' overwrought sense of pride, fuelled by Patroclus's treasonous mimicry of their superiors, is a plague-like infection:

Possessed he is with greatness,
 And speaks not to himself but with a pride
 That quarrels at self-breath. Imagined worth
 Holds in his blood such swoll'n and hot discourse
 That 'twixt his mental and his active parts
 Kingdomed Achilles in commotion rages
 And batters 'gainst himself. What should I say?
 He is so plaguy proud that the death tokens of it
 Cry 'No Recovery'. (II. 3. 168–76)

Achilles' body is likened here to a state in rebellion, and as the Homily on Obedience would attest, a disordered state is like a diseased body. 'Kingdomed' Achilles' swollen and infected body becomes a microcosm of the infected Greek body politic: he reproduces internally what is manifested externally in the camp.

Again, Gosson's metaphor of the sickening head in conflict with the dismembered body is echoed in Ulysses' suggestion that in Achilles' body there is a war between his 'mental and his active parts'. The contagiousness of Achilles' 'plaguy pride' has already begun to take effect. Nestor confirms that 'in the imitation of these twain [...] many are infect' (lines 185–87). Ajax, we are told, is one such who has succumbed to the epidemic. He has 'grown self-willed' and also keeps his tent holding 'factious feasts' with a head 'full as proud' as Achilles (lines 188–91). Worse still, the 'rank' and objectionable Thersites, 'whose gall coins slanders like a mint', has also fallen victim to the levelling contagion since he has been set 'to match us in comparisons with dirt, | To weaken and discredit our exposure, | How rank so ever rounded in with danger' (lines 194–96). Quite clearly, Ulysses appears to replicate antitheatrical arguments by representing theatre as plague-like in its dissemination and as plague-causing. The scene rehearses precisely the fear evident in antitheatrical discourse that theatre's rupture of degree threatens to uproot the

foundations of the social hierarchy by causing the ladder of rank to become fluid and indivisible.⁶¹ It is the 'illness' of pride manifested as 'self-will' in Achilles and Ajax, a condition which makes them abandon their prescriptive identity and remake themselves in an image better suited to their own feelings of self-superiority, which threatens the upheaval of the precariously balanced ladder. When individuals seek something higher than their lot (and thus pretend to be who they are not) power ceases to operate from top to bottom and instead, as Ulysses suggests, self-will and ambition threaten utter social destruction:

Then everything includes itself in power,
Power into will, will into appetite;
And appetite, an universal wolf,
So doubly seconded with will and power,
Must make perforce an universal prey,
And last eat up himself. Great Agamemnon,
This chaos, when degree is suffocate,
Follows the choking. (1. 3. 119–26)

The chaos of indistinction comes in the form of a contagious theatrical epidemic, in which the infected place 'self-will' before the predetermined authentic identity given them at birth. Ulysses thus not only replicates the arguments of antitheatrical discourse but also exposes its contradictions and inconsistencies.

This onstage embodiment of antitheatricality provokes certain questions. Is it possible, as Jean Howard has suggested,⁶² for a play to perform unconsciously the work of ideology by not calling attention to its replication of antitheatrical discourse, thereby concealing from its audience the mechanisms and strategies of that

⁶¹ For an examination of the tenuous, fluid notions of order in this scene, see Gregory W. Bredbeck, *Sodomy and Interpretation: Marlowe to Milton* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), pp. 41–43. Bredbeck convincingly argues that the scene problematizes the tension between precept and praxis, and addresses the potentiality that ascribed positions in the social order are merely arbitrary constructions. He states that there is the question of a 'simple but fatal indeterminacy underlying the entire scene; the question is, Does hierarchy inscribe men, or do men inscribe hierarchy — is order a matter of precept or of praxis? The philosophical problem beneath the rhetoric of the Greek council scene, then, is the anxious possibility that precept and praxis are not separate epistemological realms but, rather, are arbitrary divisions that randomly intermingle and exist coterminously' (pp. 42–43). The existence of the entire hierarchical system is dependent on 'men's will to have it exist', rather than 'men [being] dependent on it' (p. 42). The system is thus mutually constitutive — in order for the precept to be true it relies on the obedience of individuals and their adherence to its terms.

⁶² Howard, *Stage and Social Struggle*, pp. 47–57.

discourse? Or is it equally possible for the very staging of antitheatricality to act as a potential site of resistance to such attacks? Howard persuasively suggests that the 'meanings and ideological effectivity' of antitheatricality within plays, 'depend very much on the context and manner of its deployment';⁶³ but perhaps the positioning of antitheatrical discourse within the immediate performance context of the theatre suggests a mode of appropriation that is always-already resistant to such arguments. *Troilus and Cressida* effectively demonstrates this.

To suggest that Ulysses replicates antitheatrical argument, in the sense of a mere repetition of these ideas, would be to ignore the conditions of Elizabethan performance. The character of Ulysses is a role played by an actor already engaged in an act of appropriation. Early modern performances did not employ period costumes for historically set plays. Ulysses, as 'Prince of Ithaca' (I. 3. 69), requires the player to dress in the hand-me-down robes of the nobility that the companies purchased from the deceased estates of their higher order contemporaries. If the re-creation of identity by players renders the self as reproducible and unfixed, the onstage representation of monarchs and other nobility by people of comparatively low social status performs a similarly corrosive function.

Franco Moretti's argument about tragedy's placing of kings onstage, which thus 'performs the degradation of the cultural image of the sovereign', is particularly valid in this case.⁶⁴ The deconsecration of monarchical power is achieved, as Stephen Mullaney suggests, 'not only by reproducing it but by rendering it reproducible'.⁶⁵ Ulysses' antitheatrical remonstrance of Patroclus and Achilles for their disdainful imitations of the monarch figure of Agamemnon is thus ironically framed within a similar theatrical act. The very staging of the role of Ulysses, as well as those of Agamemnon and the other Grecian commanders, by players would have been offensive to someone like Gosson.

The reflexivity of the staging of antitheatrical argument is emphasized by Ulysses' critique of Patroclus as the 'strutting player' who likes to 'hear the wooden dialogue and sound | 'Twixt his stretched footing and the scaffoldage' (I. 3. 153–56). These references to the actor and the wooden platform of the playhouse stage frame the antitheatrical sentiment of the speech within a *metatheatrical* performance mode, drawing attention to the artifice of representation. The audience is forced into a comparison between the poor acting technique Ulysses' describes and the abilities

⁶³ Howard, *Stage and Social Struggle*, p. 49.

⁶⁴ Moretti, 'Tragic Form as the Deconsecration of Sovereignty', p. 44.

⁶⁵ Mullaney, 'After the New Historicism', p. 32.

of the player who stands before them personating that character. Ulysses further derides the pageantry by painting Patroclus's imitations as 'ridiculous and awkward' (line 149), enacted with 'o'er-wrested seeming' (line 157) and a voice 'like a chime a-mending' (line 159). He then, by parodic mimicry, appears to re-create the private theatrical scene for the benefit of his betters, Agamemnon and Nestor, acting out the parts of both player and spectator:

At this fusty stuff
 The large Achilles on his pressed bed lolling
 From his deep chest laughs out loud applause,
 Cries 'Excellent! 'Tis Agamemnon just.
 Now play me Nestor, hem and stroke thy beard,
 As he being dressed to some oration.'
 That's done as near as the extremest ends
 Of parallels, as like Vulcan and his wife.
 Yet god Achilles still cries, 'Excellent!
 'Tis Nestor right. Now play him me, Patroclus,
 Arming to an answer in a night alarm.'
 And then forsooth the faint defects of age
 Must be the scene of mirth: to cough and spit,
 And with a palsy, fumbling on his gorget,
 Shake in and out the rivet. And at this sport
 Sir Valour dies, cries, 'O enough Patroclus!
 Or give me ribs of steel. I shall split all
 In pleasure of my spleen.' And in this fashion
 All our abilities, gifts, natures, shapes,
 [...]

serves

As stuff for these two to make paradoxes. (I. 3. 161–84)

By imitating and satirizing Achilles and Patroclus, Ulysses employs a theatrical device to expose the source of the theatrical plague infecting the Greek camp. The re-enactment gains a further layer of intrigue if we take into account the fact that many critics have viewed this moment as a thinly veiled critique of the Greek leaders. Ulysses reimitates Patroclus's imitations as a means of covertly deriding Agamemnon and Nestor. In his admonition of Patroclus for his mocking debasement of royalty, Ulysses effectively performs his own degradation of sovereignty by re-enacting the imitations. He participates in the contagious chain of mimesis that has unhinged the fixity of order in the Grecian camp; exacerbating the epidemic he has identified as the source 'whereof all our power is sick' (I. 3. 139). Ulysses reinscribes and exploits the same theatricality which he defines as the 'fever' weakening and shredding the maintenance of social order (I. 3. 135). If, as David Scott

Kastan has suggested, the ‘counterfeit of royalty [by players] raises the possibility that royalty is a counterfeit’, by extension the ‘vizarding’ of identity raises the possibility that identity is a counterfeit.⁶⁶ The play exposes the anxiety that underlies the arguments of theatre’s enemies: that identity is entirely theatrical, that social role is only fulfilled by roleplay, and that since the internal being given a person at birth can only be manifested externally it can easily be fabricated. Ulysses thus self-consciously parodies the identity crisis encountered by early modern culture, and through his dissembling effectively reveals the antitheatrical fear that theatre can bring about the dissolution of social order.

Ulysses’ apparent onstage embodiment of antitheatrical sentiment is deliberately offset by his awareness of his own theatricality. The play contains several scenes of theatre, plays-within-the-play, which are either entirely orchestrated or, at least, catalysed by Ulysses. Indeed, antitheatricality is further collapsed when in Act III, scene 3, Ulysses stages a theatrical pageant as a means of curing Achilles’ affliction. He informs Nestor that a remedy is required to prevent the epidemic engulfing the entire encampment and destroying the Greek victory:

Blunt wedges rive hard knots. The seeded pride
That hath to this maturity blown up
In rank Achilles must or now be cropped
Or, shedding, breed a nursery of like evil
To overbulk us all. (I. 3. 310–14)

The passage evokes the antitheatrical argument that theatres were the nurseries of idolatry and sin, breeding the same dispositions in their audiences as they presented on stage. In response to Hector’s challenge, Ulysses proposes that by some ‘device let blockish Ajax draw | the sort to fight with Hector’ (I. 3. 368–69). Achilles has grown far ‘too insolent’ for him to be allowed to fight Hector; a successful outcome would only bring further suffering to the Greek camp having to bear with ‘the pride and salt scorn of his eyes’. A loss would bring general dishonour in the defeat of their ‘best man’ (I. 3. 362–67). The plan involves a piece of theatrical deceit, falsely building Ajax up as the preferred fighter as a means of curing Achilles pride:

Among ourselves
Give him allowance as the worthier man —
For that will physic the great Myrmidon,
[...]
Ajax employed plucks down Achilles’ plumes. (I. 3. 369–79)

⁶⁶ Kastan, ‘Proud Majesty Made a Subject’, p. 464.

The scene is set up as self-consciously theatrical, with Ulysses as the playwright scripting the action and dialogue. The other Greek generals are instructed to 'put on a form of strangeness' (III. 3. 50–51), and to pass by Achilles and ignore him 'as if he were forgot' (III. 3. 40). Achilles' disorderly pride and his theatrical disease are thus curiously cured by theatre.⁶⁷

Rather than simply repeating antitheatrical discourse in *Troilus and Cressida*, Shakespeare appropriates it, reframing its argument within a parodic and self-conscious theatricality. By re-presenting antitheatricality in this way, the play effectively dismantles its strategies. Mullaney has argued: 'once placed into circulation, any cultural practice, text or representation is available for and subject to appropriation, for both licit and illicit ends'.⁶⁸ This is true in both antitheatrical writing and its dramatic staging. Antitheatricalists, like Gosson, appropriate disease metaphors and use them to demonize theatre. *Troilus and Cressida* reappropriates such representations and uses them to resist antitheatrical arguments, rendering them void. Obviously conscious of the connections between theatre and plague at the time, the self-reflexive theatricality of *Troilus and Cressida* is perhaps more willing to 'bequeath you its diseases' (to borrow a phrase from Pandarus) than implore the playgoers to repel them.

⁶⁷ The duel proposed by Hector may itself be seen as a piece of theatre aimed at restoring the Greek camp to its former health. He implies this in his parting words to the Trojan generals, suggesting that the enemy is crippled by factionalism and an epidemic of mimetic rivalry: 'I have a roisting challenge sent amongst | The dull and factious nobles of the Greeks | Will shriek amazement into their drowsy spirits. | I was advertised their great general [Achilles] slept | Whilst emulation in the army crept; | This I presume will wake him' (II. 2. 207–12).

⁶⁸ Mullaney, 'After the New Historicism', p. 37.

THE ELEMENTAL GERTRUDE: HOWARD BARKER'S REFASHIONING OF HAMLET'S MOTHER

Steve Chinna

In May 2004, I directed students in a university production of English playwright Howard Barker's *Gertrude (the Cry)* at the Dolphin Theatre at the University of Western Australia.¹ Barker's play draws on the canonical *Hamlet*, known best in the various print and performance versions attributed to William Shakespeare. Barker's play, which I shall refer to as *Gertrude*, is what critic Ian Shuttleworth termed a 'palimpsest upon an already extant work' and is one of several that Barker has written over, or 'written back to'.² These include *Women Beware Women* (1986, Thomas Middleton), *Minna* (1994, a reworking of G. E. Lessing's 1767 play, *Minna von Barnhelm*), *Uncle Vanya* (1992, Anton Chekhov), and *Seven Lears: The Pursuit of the Good* (1989), a 'prequel' which treats the life of Lear up till the timing of Shakespeare's play and strongly features, as protagonists, the lovers of Lear — a mother and her daughter, the latter of whom becomes the mother of Lear's three daughters. Barker's treatment of Middleton's play retained the first three and a half acts, somewhat condensed but essentially verbatim, and then developed the later acts as almost completely rewritten dialogue, with alterations to the plot — principally where Leantio and Livia triumph, with the help of

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¹ Howard Barker, *Gertrude — the Cry/Knowledge and a Girl* (London: Calder, 2002).

² Ian Shuttleworth's review of the Wrestling School production, Riverside Studios, London, in *The Financial Times*, October 2002.

the Ward. (*Uncle*) *Vanya* imagines a life-affirming world where Vanya takes control of his destiny (as well as his name — Ivan). Chekhov, who enters the play, is defeated and expires on stage, holding Vanya's hand. More recently, in May of 2006, I directed university students in a production of *Knowledge and a Girl* (*The Snow White Case*). This play constitutes Barker's reworking of the Grimm brothers' tale, with the Queen/wicked stepmother as the wilful protagonist. I give this information to help furnish a context for this paper, and how *Gertrude* (*the Cry*) continues a practice by Barker to revisit and interrogate these earlier plays. Importantly, Barker is neither a bardolator nor an iconoclast. He uses Shakespeare's play as a springboard for exploring possibilities — particularly where the possibilities of desire and passion may flourish in a catastrophic world. Barker, in an interview with Gilles Menegaldo, talks of 'honouring' the text in these revisitings and re-workings. As Barker puts it, he is not attempting to 'modernise the texts, which would be a futile and chic enterprise' but to engage 'rather in a quarrel at the ethical level with aspects of the writing'.³

Barker's works are becoming increasingly more known, although productions of his plays tend to occur more often in Europe, North America, and Australia than in the United Kingdom. However, the Wrestling School, a flexible ensemble of actors based in London — originally coming mainly from Joint Stock, the Royal Shakespeare Company, and the Royal Court — have staged Barker's plays since 1988 in the United Kingdom and abroad. While Kenny Ireland was the principal director of the earlier plays with the Wrestling School, Barker has directed his own plays with them since 1994, starting with *Hated Nightfall*. Universities have also proved fertile venues for productions of his works. Nonetheless, it would still be useful to provide some brief background on the playwright/director.

Born in South London in 1946, Barker has described himself as being raised in a 'ferociously aggressive working-class movement' — his father a 'Stalinist working-class shop steward in the print industry'.⁴ He has an MA in History from Sussex University, and after writing poems, short stories and novels, and several radio plays, Barker had his play *Cheek* staged at the Royal Court in 1970. He started his play writing from a socialist perspective — coming out of that group of English playwrights in the late 1960s and early 1970s such as David Hare, Trevor Griffiths, David Edgar, Edward Bond, and Howard Brenton, and Caryl Churchill in the late

³ Gilles Menegaldo, 'Challenging Conventions: An Interview with Howard Barker', *Sources*, 3 (1997), 157–71 (p. 164).

⁴ Jo Litson, 'Chaos Theory', *Weekend Australian*, 26–27 February 2000, pp. 22–23 (p. 23).

1970s. Barker's early plays were strongly focused on class struggle. He states that he 'gnawed at English socialism for ten years [...] coming at last to History'.⁵ Barker's body of work is impressive — plays, poetry, film and television scripts, books theorizing and arguing for his approach to theatre, and essays — frequently in print in newspapers and magazines.⁶ He has been a prolific publicist for his own theatre works — and is not short of a manifesto or two. It is not that he is trying to change the world, but he is certainly seeking to rescue theatre from what he sees as its moribund naturalism and easy-watching content. He writes: 'The theatre must start to take its audience seriously. It must stop telling them stories they can understand.'⁷ This is where Barker differs quite radically from the abovementioned playwrights — these 'sociologists' (as Barker has called them) who seek to explain and rationalize their dramatic worlds.

Barker terms his plays from the mid-1980s onwards as a Theatre of Catastrophe. The settings are catastrophic, invariably after some calamity that has rendered the normal mechanisms of social life inoperable — whether it is through war, or a plague, or natural catastrophe. As Amanda Price puts it in her introduction to the second edition of *Arguments for a Theatre*:

The settings of Barker's later plays are [...] panoramas of desolation, reflecting the ravaged landscape of the ideological battlefield. The solid structures and inviolable edifices which characterized the setting of the naturalistic play give way to crumbling and shattered remnants, standing as testimony to willed destruction. The characters which traverse this landscape are refugees from a world which once seemed to offer them reason and purpose; as the structures atrophy around them, so does their ability to give their lives coherent meaning. Out of the pain of their loss emerges an imperative: the need to forge new meanings out of the fractured ruins of their identity. (p. 7)

In these liminal situations, characters no longer have the sustenance of regularity and habit to sustain them. They must learn different ways of thinking and acting — and those who cannot adapt often perish.

What Barker is seeking is a theatre that invites the spectator to speculate — to move beyond the comfort zones of the majority of the forms of cultural representation. It is what Charles Lamb calls, in a book of the same name, a 'theatre of seduction', with Barker inviting the spectator to explore the boundaries of moral

⁵ Howard Barker, *Arguments for a Theatre*, 2nd edn (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), p. 23.

⁶ Barker's *Arguments for a Theatre* has been in three editions: 1989, 1993, and 1997. His most recent book is Howard Barker, *Death, The One and the Art of Theatre* (London: Routledge, 2005).

⁷ Barker, *Arguments for a Theatre*, p. 18.

experience and emotion.⁸ This is working against a long history of control of the imagination, from Plato onwards. Barker's theatre is overtly a theatre of speculation, not a place for learning and instruction. It is a theatre that requires effort and challenges the spectator. As the Wrestling School web site puts it: 'Theatre of Catastrophe takes as its first principle the idea that art is not digestible. Rather, it is an irritant in consciousness, like the grain of sand in the oyster's gut.'⁹

Gertrude (the Cry)

Gertrude (the Cry) was premiered at Riverside Studios, Hammersmith in London in October 2002, and at Kronborg Castle at Helsingør (Elsinore) in Denmark at the annual International Shakespeare Festival later in the same year. In my discussion of the play, I will be drawing on the experience of having directed a production of *Gertrude (the Cry)*. It is doubtful that I need relate the plot of *Hamlet*, but in my discussion of Barker's play I will necessarily be referring to it. So, for those who are familiar with it, briefly bear with my reading of the play.

Claudius kills his brother, the King Hamlet (husband of Gertrude, father of Hamlet), in order to take the throne of Elsinore, and to possess the late King's wife — Gertrude. The seizure of power is the motive, as well as a seeming passion for Gertrude. Hamlet sees himself as betrayed by this murder and this union. He certainly finds the hasty remarriage of his mother repugnant, and Shakespeare needs no help from Barker in the way that Hamlet's thoughts are expressed. He makes reference to the 'incestuous sheets' of Gertrude and Claudius and the 'rank sweat of an enseamed bed, | Stewed in corruption, honeying and making love | Over the nasty sty' (III. 4. 81–83).¹⁰ Hamlet, the prince, plots revenge on Claudius, the king, but in the conventions of the revenge tragedy form, must gather enough evidence before taking his revenge — along the way, killing Polonius, destroying Ophelia (the daughter of Polonius) through madness and suicide, and ensuring the deaths of his two former school friends, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. It would appear that Claudius knows what he is up to and, after failing to have him killed by the King of England, tries to orchestrate the death of Hamlet by Ophelia's brother,

⁸ Charles Lamb, *Howard Barker's Theatre of Seduction* (Amsterdam: Harwood, 1997).

⁹ The Wrestling School, 'Theatre of Catastrophe', <<http://www.thewrestlingschool.co.uk/catastrophe.html>> [accessed July 2007].

¹⁰ References to Shakespeare are taken from William Shakespeare, *Complete Works*, ed. by Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

Laertes. Bodies litter the stage at the end of the play — Hamlet, Laertes, Gertrude, and Claudius — as a new ruler, Fortinbras, takes over.

Barker's *Gertrude* has an obvious and distinct relationship to its source text *Hamlet*, in its settings, some of its characters, and its themes of desire, lust, and betrayal. It also has a strong resonance with the form of Jacobean revenge tragedies in its feral stage world of betrayal and death — signified by a fitting number of 'dead' bodies on stage at their conclusions. However, there are major differences from the source text. Gertrude, as may be deduced from the title, is given the role of principal protagonist, appearing in almost every scene as she carves out her own space; Hamlet is sidelined to some degree and reconfigured into a mean-spirited and misogynistic prude, scarcely upset by his father's death and dangerously agitated by what he sees as his mother's promiscuity, rather than her betrayal of his father. Here, he is made king and eventually chooses suicide rather than revenge. Another major, and most important, difference is that the play takes a step in a different direction from conventional closure where justice is done and seen to be done. In particular, there is a wilful lack of conventional moral rewards or punishments being meted out, and this appears to lie at the heart of certain critics' and spectators' dissatisfactions with the play. Three aspects that Barker has commented on in respect of Shakespeare's tragedy, though more broadly covering the overall genre of tragedy, are the desire for resolution, along with 'reconciliation or apology'. Barker's tragedy, which he terms catastrophic tragedy, is 'open-ended and continues. All that the audience can expect to gain from it [...] is a sense of human complexity'.¹¹

While Shakespeare's play, in the print text at least, has a multitude of characters — obviously doubled or tripled in performance — in Barker's play there are seven speaking roles, listed in the print text as follows:

<i>Gertrude</i>	A Queen
<i>Claudius</i>	A Prince
<i>Cascan</i>	Servant to Gertrude
<i>Hamlet</i>	An Heir
<i>Isola</i>	Mother of Claudius
<i>Ragusa</i>	A Young Woman
<i>Albert</i>	A Duke of Mecklenburg

Claudius, Gertrude, and Hamlet are retained from the Shakespeare play. Polonius (so faithful to Claudius) becomes Cascan (so faithful to Gertrude). Ophelia is vaguely echoed in Ragusa (a consort for Hamlet, but strongly proactive in her taking both Albert and Claudius as sex partners, and in her drowning the child of

¹¹ Menegaldo, 'Challenging Conventions', p. 160.

Claudius and Gertrude). Albert can be seen, in part, as an amalgam of Horatio (friend to Hamlet) and Fortinbras (conqueror of Denmark). Isola, the mother of Claudius, is a purely Barker invention. Fascinated by the sexual power of Gertrude, which she sees as echoing her own former power, her primary desire (but always conflictual) is to save the life of her remaining son, Claudius. Paradoxically, and somehow inevitably, it is Claudius who strangles his mother, to 'PUT HER OUT HER MISERY [*sic*]' (p. 89), so that she would not survive to witness the death of Claudius at the hands of Gertrude. And there is the doomed, drowned baby of Gertrude and Claudius, Jane, who cries but never speaks. There is no ghost in *Gertrude* — the king is dead.

Barker's *Gertrude* is a play in twenty-one scenes. Where Shakespeare jumps in postfratricide, and the poisoning of the old king in the orchard is related back to us by the Ghost's words to Hamlet, Barker's play opens with the murder of Old Hamlet. Thus, Barker's play takes a seemingly more conventional linear line, starting at the beginning with the murder of the King, and finishing at the end with the death of Claudius and the marriage of Gertrude to Albert. However, the staging of this initial murder shifts markedly from the accepted conventions of both the Elizabethan/Jacobean and Naturalistic modes. At the start, Gertrude and Claudius debate who should kill Old Hamlet, not whether they should or not. This is the very beginning of the play, and there is no equivocation about Gertrude's role in this murder:

GERTRUDE. (*Entering*) I should
 Surely
 I should
 Me
 CLAUDIUS. (*Entering*) No
 GERTRUDE. Me
 Let me
 CLAUDIUS. It must be me who
 GERTRUDE. Why not me
 CLAUDIUS. Me who
 GERTRUDE. HE IS MY HUSBAND WHY NOT ME
 (*Pause*)
 CLAUDIUS. Because he *is* your husband it must be me
 GERTRUDE. Let me kill
 Oh let me kill for you
 (*Pause*)
 CLAUDIUS. I'm killing
 Me
 (*Pause*)

GERTRUDE. KILL MY HUSBAND THEN KILL HIM
FOR ME (p. 9)

On Claudius's demand, Gertrude then strips naked. (In the university production, the student actor playing Gertrude was directed to 'cheat' her nudity by turning side on to the audience and opening her long coat to the hungry gaze of the actor playing Claudius. There is no doubt that such a strategy undermines the vital role that nakedness plays in Barker's theatre,¹² but the moral and political context of student theatre in Australia at that time demanded such a tactic.) Once the poison is poured in the ear, Claudius and Gertrude 'couple' over the top of the dying King, the combination of Gertrude's cry, Claudius's orgasmic cries, and the King's death cries forming what Barker terms in the stage directions, a 'music of extremes' (p. 10). Importantly, one of those cries is Gertrude's ecstatic cry, a cry occasioned by the act of betrayal, rather than a Naturalistic vocal response to orgasm. This cry resonates throughout the play, principally at those moments of betrayal when Gertrude's desires override any moral precepts. It is also what Claudius lives for — for him, 'it kills God' (p. 22).

The action then moves to where the Old King lies in state. Hamlet enters and coldly contemplates 'tearlessness' rather than grief. Without any Naturalistic justification for his knowledge, he also identifies Gertrude as a killer:

You
Choked
Him
With
A
View (p. 17)

The next scene is set at a graveyard, where Gertrude is performing fellatio on Claudius as Isola enters, the mother of Claudius and the dead King Hamlet; then to a banquet, some seven weeks later, where Hamlet expresses his further disgust at his mother's behaviour and belittles his wife-to-be, Ragusa. Albert, duke of Mecklenburg, an old school friend of Hamlet's, arrives and becomes the lover of Gertrude and dallies with Ragusa, Hamlet's consort. It is later implied that Ragusa also 'shares' the bed of Claudius. An incestuous stew, indeed.

¹² On Barker's use of nakedness on the stage, see Rabey and Gritzner, 'Barker in Conversation' (pp. 34–35), and Elizabeth Angel-Perez, 'Facing Defacement' (pp. 136–49), both in *Theatre of Catastrophe: New Essays on Howard Barker*, ed. by Karoline Gritzner and David Ian Rabey (London: Oberon, 2006).

To condense: Cascan is killed by Hamlet — in part echoing the killing of Polonius, but very different in that there is nothing accidental about this murder. Cascan, in perceiving the danger that Hamlet (as a moralist) presents to his mother and realizing that Claudius cannot act, pursues him (offstage) in an attempt to kill him. But, while Cascan is carrying the baby Jane under one arm, Hamlet — in Isola's words — 'has a knife'. Hamlet 'sticks it in [...] more than necessary' (p. 72), which demonstrates a certain willingness to kill that is at odds with his professed expressions of morality, but aptly fit the actions of a revenging malcontent. Eventually, Claudius throttles his mother, Isola; Ragusa drowns the baby Jane; and Gertrude kills Claudius with her words of betrayal. As David Kilpatrick puts it in a review: 'This final scene [...] is a brutal blend of matricide, infanticide, and ultimately, death by words.'¹³ Gertrude and Albert exit for their honeymoon — 'two weeks in a warm climate' (p. 91) — leaving the bodies of Hamlet, Isola, Claudius, and the baby Jane on the stage. Albert's parting words are

BURN THESE
BURN AND SCATTER THESE (p. 93)

While Barker's re-'playing' of Gertrude gives prominence to a decidedly sidelined character in Shakespeare's play, Hamlet is rewritten in markedly different terms to the majority conventional treatments of the tragic hero. Hamlet is called, unflatteringly, a 'prig, and a prude, and a moralist' by his grandmother Isola, who adds, 'and you hide inside your indignation like a baby in a pen' (p. 24). But, Hamlet is more than a prig, a prude, and a moralist — he is a dangerous moralist. As Cascan warns Claudius:

Oh you do not know the moralists you do not know the python length of their ambition
and how could you innocent oh innocent are the immoralists (p. 68)

Hamlet overtly expresses his misogyny — towards his mother and his betrothed — frequently drawing on the source character's distaste for sexuality and women, and invokes a certain antic disposition when contemplating 'tearlessness' while viewing the body of his father. As the following speech from Hamlet shows, Barker often leaves the work of punctuation and phrasing to the actor, allowing the rhythm of the text to dictate, or suggest, appropriate phrasing.

HAMLET. I expected to be more moved than this (*pauses*)
Cascades
Storms of

¹³ David Kilpatrick, 'Gertrude — the Cry', review, *Theatre Journal*, 55 (2003), 704–06 (p. 704).

Torrents of emotion

Never mind these things will come later when I least expect them in bed with a bitch
or on a horse eyes full of tears you're crying she will say you're crying the horse will
neigh yes horse yes bitch I am and I don't know why I'm blind I'm choking silly ha ha
forgive me ha I'll get off off the bitch off the horse have you a handkerchief

(He laughs briefly)

Horses don't have handkerchiefs but bitches might to wipe their crevices that stinks
I'll say that stinks of filthy copulations am I to wipe my eyes with that yes wipe away
and fuck your finicky fastidious and

(He laughs, shuddering)

WOMEN ARE SO COARSE (p. 13)

Hamlet also expresses his hatred of love, 'love I hate it all manifestations of the thing called love fill me with horror and contempt' (pp. 54–55), and his distaste for sex or any physical contact. He knows the truth of his father's death, but is not interested in revenge — he is the King. He eventually carries out the implications of suicide which critics and commentators have argued for in relation to the 'to be or not to be' speech in Shakespeare's play. Barker plays out the implications in his scene 19, where Hamlet appears to make the choice to die by drinking poisoned wine offered by Claudius that he knows is meant for him, as does Gertrude, his mother, in another act of betrayal. This episode, on pages 76 to 78 of the print text, is a stunningly effective piece of dramatic writing and theatrical potential. Hamlet, seesawing between Claudius and Gertrude, is finally ordered by his mother to drink the poisoned wine. He asks 'why', and Gertrude responds:

I don't know

I DON'T KNOW WHY JUST DRINK THE

(Her hands lift)

I don't know why (p. 77)

It is on a 'sudden impulse' that Hamlet lifts the glass to his lips and drinks. This voluntary impulse leads to his death on the stage, where he remains till the conclusion of the play. As Barker has stated, in an interview with Charles Lamb:

The search for a reason not to commit suicide lies at the heart of my work, and what is distilled from that is a sense of melancholy. [...] I don't mean depressing. Only a populist, entertainment-obsessed, comedy-obsessed culture confuses melancholy with depression.¹⁴

Both worlds — Barker's and Shakespeare's — are worlds where characters seek to fulfill their desires, whatever the consequences. But Shakespeare's moral world is

¹⁴ Quoted in Richard Boon and Amanda Price, 'Maps of the World: "Neo-Jacobeanism" and Contemporary British Theatre', *Modern Drama*, 41 (1998), 635–54 (p. 649).

struggling to find a balance between the scary spaces of secular free will and the sacred order of divine providence. Barker's characters are more elementally, and essentially, Jacobean than that. Their desires drive them, not the knowledge and fear of possible consequences in the here-and-now, or the hereafter. In his book, *Howard Barker: Politics and Desire*, David Ian Rabey offers a definition of desire which serves well to describe some of the characters of *Gertrude*:

The willingness to acquiesce in the destruction of all previously held notions of one's self; in the demolition of all alternative notions of importance and worth for one's self; in order to pursue the unknown possibilities which may be generated by complete and explosive sexual engagement with the desired one.¹⁵

There is a constant conflict in Barker's later plays between what David Barnett sees as 'the desire for satisfaction' that is 'constantly at odds with the imposition of order'.¹⁶ For Barnett, writing on Barker's plays, and in particular on his play *The Europeans* (in relation to its Nietzschean themes), this conflict invokes the Nietzschean paradigm of tragedy and echoes the struggle between the Apolline and the Dionysian — between rationality and ecstasy. As Cascan states on his service to Gertrude: 'My devotion IT'S AN ECSTASY' (p. 50). This struggle between desire and order is foregrounded in Barker's play in a key theme — the struggle between the moralists and the immoralists. But while Hamlet may personify the moralists, and Cascan labels Claudius as one of the immoralists, the character of Gertrude seems to inhabit a space between — an amoral space where her desires are neither moral nor immoral, but are expressions of a power that she cannot control. The cry, finally, as Claudius dies, 'comes, not from herself, but from the land' (p. 92). As Barker states in his notes on Hamlet and Gertrude:

This is a world of instinct beyond the moral speculation that binds Shakespeare to his time. Far from celebrating collective moral wisdom, it looks for salvation beyond it, even if salvation is death. If Shakespeare's Hamlet punishes the illegal, Gertrude embodies (literally, for her body is the site of the struggle) the breaking of legal and illegal alike, and the cry of Gertrude is neither in her nor of her, but the cry of a damaged world.¹⁷

¹⁵ David Ian Rabey, *Howard Barker: Politics and Desire* (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1989), p. 113.

¹⁶ David Barnett, 'Howard Barker: Polemic Theory and Dramatic Practice. Nietzsche, Metatheatre, and the Play *The Europeans*', *Modern Drama*, 44 (2001), 458–75 (p. 459).

¹⁷ Howard Barker, 'On Hamlet and Gertrude', May 2002. Quoted on the NY CIRKUS web site, <<http://www.kit.dk/2002/GERTRUDE2.htm>> [accessed July 2007].

Gertrude, the character, escapes the moral universe of both the Elizabethan/Jacobean world and our contemporary conventions of staged morality. She is — to borrow from Nietzsche — beyond good and evil. She is an elemental power, seemingly devoid of agency by the play's end. Gertrude inhabits a liminal world of amoral freedom, existing between the rights and wrongs of a societally imposed and enforced moral order and the free choice of immorality. This liminality is echoed throughout the *Elsinore* of Shakespeare's play — a medieval world of impulsive revengers struggling with the humanist and individualist Renaissance world view, where a reflective subjectivity could forestall action but suppress desire. E. M. W. Tillyard argued that the conflict between reason and passions is at the core of much of Shakespeare's moralizing. It is a moral and philosophical sphere that may well still inform us; as Tillyard puts it 'the commonplace of every age'.¹⁸ Indeed, as Shakespeare's Hamlet states in reference to his mother's hasty marriage: 'O God, a beast that wants discourse of reason | Would have mourned longer!' (I. 2. 150–51).

However, it can certainly be argued that the moral centre of *Hamlet* does not exist, other than through choices in performance — by actors and spectators. Any character morality intended by the dramatist can be subverted/diverted in performance. The words on the page are only the potential of the words in performance. Shifts of register and tone, a hand gesture, the pulling down of a corner of the mouth — all are potentially subversive of whatever conventionally agreed meaning has been determined through a literary critical history (for example, Shakespeare's character Hamlet as defined by the literary critics), rather than a variety of performance events (Hamlet as 'decided' by director, or actor, or spectator — and never necessarily one coherently predictable Hamlet).

Furthermore, how can we possibly access so much of what Shakespeare's plays are alluding to — especially in performance. We have no footnotes; we are not that educated segment of an Elizabethan audience who might understand where much or most of this potpourri of Greek, medieval, Christian, and neoclassical concepts emanate from, or what they portend. And, this may seem terribly immoral, but why should theatre works in performance profess a morality for us either to follow or to reject? We may agree or disagree with the morality of the characters on stage, but we can recognize that they are characters, that it is a fiction, that the actors leave the theatre, the lights get turned off, and we go home or elsewhere, entertaining the breaking of barriers perhaps, but not doing anything more. Theatre is

¹⁸ E. M. W. Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1943), p. 83.

neither necessarily a cathartic warning, nor an encouragement to transgression. It is a brief span of time where we may — in part and to a small degree — be temporarily transported out of our everyday lives.

Tillyard goes on to say, with reference to the Shakespeare play: ‘Gertrude’s sin is not against human decency alone but against the whole scale of being’.¹⁹ Directly following the murder of the old king, and the coupling above his dying body by Gertrude and Claudius, Barker’s *Cascan* offers a viewpoint on a different sin — the sin of ignoring the possibilities of experience through taking risks, or making the choice for ecstasy and the abyss:

All ecstasy makes ecstasy go running to a further place that is its penalty we know this how well we know this still we would not abolish ecstasy would we we would not say this ever-receding quality in ecstasy makes it unpalatable on the contrary we run behind it limping staggering I saw it there I saw it there

(*He laughs*)

A haunting mirage on the rim of life

(*He extends the gown for Gertrude*)

Eventually I can’t help thinking eventually it lures us over a cliff so what why not a cliff is a cliff worse than a bed a stinking bed inside a stinking hospital no give me the cliff do put this on the cliff every time. (pp. 10–11)

Writing in the *Guardian* in October 2002, the theatre critic Lyn Gardner asserts: ‘In the end [Barker] offers us the same choice as Gertrude: plunging over the cliff of ecstasy or dying quietly in a stinking bed in a stinking hospital. We would all choose what she chooses. It is the only moral choice.’²⁰ The assertion sounds tempting, and after following the transports of the stage for the duration of the play, one may perhaps entertain the courses of action that many of Barker’s characters take — to plunge over the cliff rather than rotting in the hospital bed. But outside of that imagined space it is questionable how many would have the guts, or honesty, to step outside the morality of a bourgeois society. As Bob Dylan wrote: ‘To live outside the law you must be honest.’²¹ Gertrude’s elemental honesty is that of a character in a play. Such honesty is harder to live up to in the actuality of the world. But, at least Barker opens the possibilities of speculating on that choice through characters such as Gertrude, or his Vanya, who dare to risk.

¹⁹ Tillyard, *Elizabethan World Picture*, p. 84.

²⁰ Lyn Gardner, ‘Gertrude: The Cry’, review, *Guardian*, 25 October 2002.

²¹ Bob Dylan, *Absolutely Sweet Marie*, Dwarf Music, 1966.

'I TAKE PLEASURE IN SINGING, SIR': TOWARDS AN INTERPRETATION OF SHAKESPEAREAN SONG

Heather Dubrow

Certain assumptions about how songs construct and are constructed by Others have survived with the persistence and power of refrain itself. To begin with, many critics still assume that songs adorn or impede the action of drama rather than advancing it.¹ In fact, as I will demonstrate, vocal performances, like lyric as a whole, often contribute to the linear movement of narrative and drama, the very pattern with which they are often contrasted. Recognizing how song can impel action and why it differs from other forms of discourse provides a new perspective on the relationship of the medium to marginalized characters. Many valuable studies of the Others who sing in these plays, such as the work of Leslie C. Dunn, attribute their newfound agency to characteristics of the social situation, notably its creation of a community of women, or, alternatively, concentrate on the content of what is performed.² Yet these analyses call for

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¹ For an exposition of that argument, see R. S. White, 'Functions of Poems and Songs in Elizabethan Romance and Romantic Comedy', *English Studies*, 68 (1987), 392–405 (pp. 399–400). This essay also provides a valuable overview of its subject.

² On the association of songs with marginalized characters, see especially two studies by Leslie C. Dunn: 'The Lady Sings in Welsh: Women's Song as Marginal Discourse on the Shakespearean Stage', in *Place and Displacement in the Renaissance*, ed. by Alvin Vos (Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1995), pp. 51–67; and 'Ophelia's Songs in *Hamlet*: Music, Madness, and the Feminine', in *Embodied Voices: Representing Female Vocality in Western Culture*, ed. by Leslie C. Dunn and Nancy A. Jones (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,

revisionist qualifications. For although the thematic content and female circles associated with songs often contribute to their power, it is primarily through the distinctive qualities of song per se, notably its ability to substitute its own rules for others, that hierarchies of gender and social status are countered. Thus otherwise marginalized women and men can achieve a measure of agency.

A large subject in its own right, the issue of Shakespearean songs necessarily gestures towards the even vaster question of the role of such verses in early modern plays. The relationship of those two exemplars of performance, songs and plays, has received far more critical attention than the relationship of lyric and narrative in early modern literature. Especially useful is William Bowden's survey of the uses of song in seventeenth-century drama; in particular, in demonstrating that songs appear in some 70 per cent of the 475 plays he examined, Bowden's study stresses the range of functions they serve, thus providing a useful warning against making the little world surveyed below an everywhere. No less valuable in its conclusions, though quite different in its focus, Diana Henderson's study of the role of song in Elizabethan drama achieves insights with broader implications through a more focused analysis of three test cases in particular, George Peele's *Arraignment of Paris*, Christopher Marlowe's *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, and Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost*.³

Methodological and ontological problems confront these and any study of songs in early modern drama, even one with my more limited agenda. Songs differ among each other in any number of ways; for example, whereas song and lyric are pervasively though problematically associated, some Shakespearean songs are not lyrics in most of the usual senses but rather ballads, while yet others are lyrics in some senses yet distinctly unlyrical in their mood, such as Silence's songs in Act V, scene 3 of *2 Henry IV* or Autolycus's in *The Winter's Tale*. My analysis focuses

1994), pp. 50–64. Also see John H. Long, *Shakespeare's Use of Music: A Study of the Music and its Performance in the Original Production of Seven Comedies* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, [(?)1955]). These critics' analyses differ from mine in a number of ways, however. For example, Dunn also observes the containment of the threat represented by singing women but attributes it largely to the framing devices used by men ('The Lady Sings in Welsh', pp. 64–66), and she argues throughout that the contrast between song and other discursive registers primarily intensifies the prior marginalization of these characters, though she also notes the power of song in performance (*ibid.*, pp. 66–67); Long unpersuasively attributes the association of song with marginal characters to mores forbidding gentlemen to perform publicly (*Shakespeare's Use of Music*, p. 3).

³ William R. Bowden, *The English Dramatic Lyric, 1603–42: A Study in Stuart Dramatic Technique* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1951), pp. v–vi; Diana E. Henderson, *Passion Made Public: Elizabethan Lyric, Gender, and Performance* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995).

largely on songs that are lyric, not narrative, in mode, but some of its observations apply to both types or to songs that, though primarily narrative, include lyric elements. If we cannot always be sure which songs should be described as lyrics, neither can we invariably achieve certainty about which passages in plays were sung. This problem directs our attention to a more theoretical one: to what extent and in what ways if any are the songs in drama ontologically different from types of discourse they resemble? Although Jonathan Culler has suggested a binary divide between lyric and the default position of ordinary speech,⁴ in fact many intermediary positions insistently present themselves. Similarly, it is not always possible to locate an inherent linguistic distinction between the songs in plays and other passages. In some respects the seductive language with which Volpone attempts to court Celia immediately after singing 'Come, my Celia, let us prove' is more lyrical than that classically restrained song itself. The sonnet delivered during Romeo and Juliet's courtship is evidently a passage of heightened lyricism but not literally a song. Despite and because of these category crises, Frye's radical of presentation — that is, the fact that given words are sung — remains crucial.⁵ In particular, Shakespeare so often presents song as discursively ruptural, as a dramatic break from many other kinds of language that thus qualifies some of my earlier generalizations about the overlapping of discursive types.

This is not to deny the kinship of song with a few linguistic forms that are themselves ruptural. If charm and chant are among the roots of lyric, as Andrew Welsh has so cogently demonstrated, one is certainly aware of their connection in the songs of many Shakespearean plays.⁶ 'Charming your blood with pleasing heaviness' (III. 1. 215) is the effect predicted for the Welsh song in *1 Henry IV*.⁷ In the opening of Act II, scene 2 of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the fairies' apotropaic song at Titania's bedside is followed virtually immediately by Oberon's charm. Arguing as well that charms differ from songs in the former's characteristic

⁴ Jonathan Culler, 'Apostrophe Revisited', paper presented at the 2001 meeting of the Modern Language Association of America. I am grateful to the author for making a copy available to me.

⁵ The concept of the radical of presentation is developed throughout Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957); see esp. p. 246.

⁶ Andrew Welsh, *Roots of Lyric: Primitive Poetry and Modern Poetics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), chaps 6–7.

⁷ Throughout this essay I cite *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. by G. Blakemore Evans, 2nd edn (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997). I am indebted to Leslie C. Dunn for drawing my attention to this comment and for a useful analysis of the passage in which it appears: Dunn, 'The Lady Sings in Welsh', pp. 58–60.

emphasis on the private rather than the communal, irregular rhythm, and reliance on magic words rather than nonsense words, Welsh suggests that chants may combine elements of both charm and song;⁸ spectators of the scene in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* are likely to be aware that while one of the two passages in question is a song aiming to protect Titania and the other a charm intended to harm her, their tonal registers are similar, and both might be performed as chants. In short, the similarities between these types encourage the audience to compare and thus think further about each of these discursive registers, thus directing attention to their distinctive workings.

Song itself is not, however, distinctive in one way one might well predict, a miming of the properties of soliloquy. Shakespeare, as studies ranging from the classic work of Wolfgang Clemen to the recent revisionist analyses of James Hirsh have shown, was attracted to the soliloquy and redeveloped it from earlier models.⁹ Given the association, however problematized and limited in the early modern period, between lyric and the meditative, we would expect to find a significant percentage of Shakespearean songs associated with or serving the functions of soliloquies. Quite the contrary. Shakespeare is interested in lyric as a form of speech that interacts with other forms, as I have argued elsewhere; and in the characterological analogue to that concern, he is interested as well in how the singer interacts with those around him.¹⁰ Henderson's acute observation about *Love's Labour's Lost*, as well as the work of Marlowe and Peele, applies to the rest of Shakespeare's canon as well: 'Shakespeare's play is very much about lyricism as a social act.'¹¹ Most of the time when songs appear in his plays, unlike those of some of his contemporaries, the emphasis is on interplay between people and registers of discourse, not isolation or removal. Exceptions of course present themselves; for example, although the song Julia hears in Act IV, scene 2 of *Two Gentlemen of Verona* enables some puns on the behaviour of the performer, its performance per se contributes comparatively little. On the whole, however, songs participate actively both in the dramatic action and in the forms of narrativity it involves.

⁸ Welsh, *Roots of Lyric*, pp. 162–66.

⁹ Wolfgang Clemen, *Shakespeare's Soliloquies*, trans. by Charity Scott Stokes (London: Methuen, 1987); James Hirsh, *Shakespeare and the History of Soliloquies* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2003).

¹⁰ On the relationship of lyric to other forms of speech, see my *Challenges of Orpheus*, esp. chap. 5.

¹¹ Henderson, *Passion Made Public*, p. 169.

In so doing, they serve a wide range of roles; for example, the Clown's love songs in Act II, scene 3 of *Twelfth Night* and his duet with Sir Toby in the same scene establish the rowdiness against which Malvolio rails. One should, however, render Henderson's observation about lyricism as a social act more specific by acknowledging that Shakespearean songs are typically associated not only with social acts but with ones involving the assertion and achievement of power, whether it is the apotropaic magic of the fairies in the concluding scene and some earlier ones in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* or the different but not unrelated seductive strategies of Autolycus and Ariel when he is calling to Ferdinand. When Laertes alerts Ophelia to the danger Hamlet represents 'If with too credent ear [she] list his songs' (I. 3. 30), he is cautioning her about the potency of songs, literal and otherwise, implying that, like the vows against which her father shortly warns her, they may serve as 'brokers' (line 127) in a campaign of 'unmast' red importunity' (line 32).

Although Laertes also reminds Ophelia that Hamlet's agency is limited because of his social position, clearly his love lyrics can express and enhance his power as princely lover in predictable and conventional ways. In some particularly intriguing Shakespearean instances, however, the power of song is transgressive because of the type of sentiments being expressed or the type of person expressing them or both. I am suggesting, in other words, that singing, so often a pastoral activity, fills a liberatory discursive function similar to the comparable role Paul Alpers attributes to pastoral itself.¹² Notice that the hunting song in Act IV, scene 2 of *As You Like It* not only expresses the commonplace anxieties about adultery but links them to male prowess in that the hunter who killed the deer wears the horns. In other words, achievement in male pursuits like hunting is not adequate protection against failure in amorous ones; the song stages male competition, with jealousy of the hunter's achievements symbolically represented as the fulfilled desire to cuckold him.

The connection between singing and power in cases like that one is significant in part because it highlights the question at the core of this essay: how and why do marginalized characters sing? In the instance from *As You Like It*, male courtiers perform the song, but it is striking how often in Shakespearean drama the singer is a woman, a Fool, or someone else whose power and status are delimited, as Leslie C. Dunn among others has observed.¹³ Similarly, although she does not

¹² Paul Alpers, 'Pastoral and the Domain of Lyric in Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar*', *Representations*, 12 (1985), 83–100.

¹³ On the association of songs with marginalized characters, see especially Dunn, 'Ophelia's Songs in *Hamlet*', and Dunn, 'The Lady Sings in Welsh'; see also Long, *Shakespeare's Use of Music*.

discuss *Hamlet* at length, Henderson's overall argument that song is often linked to both positive and negative responses to female power is as germane to that play as to the ones she does analyse. For Ophelia's songs are transgressive: she is insisting, as Nona Paula Fienberg has pointed out, on becoming a subject not object, and her subject matter is deviant and threatening in that she is talking about her father's death and about male betrayal of women.¹⁴ The play is concerned throughout with how one can speak the truth in a world of spies (which is one of the many implications of the hall of mirrors, with people concealed, in the Branagh film version), and various solutions — Ophelia's turn to song, Hamlet's disguised and whirling words, the licence of the gravediggers — are compared with each other.

The contrast between Hamlet's and Ophelia's songs alerts us to how often in Shakespeare's plays marginal characters sing to accomplish a very different function from Hamlet's: to find a means by which they can say what they otherwise dare not say, or, indeed, to find a means to have any voice at all.¹⁵ It is no accident that, as William C. Carroll has demonstrated, Poor Tom sings frequently.¹⁶ In the case at hand, song allows Ophelia two interrelated opportunities: she can introduce ideas that might not otherwise be voiced or voiceable, and she can express those ideas in a social situation, as a form of communication and even interaction.¹⁷ One could readily envision a play in which madness is figured by the solitary singing of these words, but that is precisely the opposite of what Ophelia does; although her performance is a marker of madness, there is indeed method in it, and the method fills social functions. To the queen's 'what imports this song?' (IV. 5. 27), she replies, 'pray you mark' (line 28) and then delivers the verses that should be marked by the audience. And she repeats exactly the same three words six lines later. Insisting her audience both interpret and participate in the songs, shortly afterwards she declares, 'Pray, let's have no words of this, but when they ask you what it means, say you this' (lines 46–47). What follows, the song she prefers to other types of words,

¹⁴ Nona Paula Fienberg, "She Chanted Snatches of Old Tunes": Ophelia's Songs in a Polyphonic *Hamlet*, in *Approaches to Teaching Shakespeare's 'Hamlet'*, ed. by Bernice W. Kliman (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2002), pp. 153–56.

¹⁵ White, 'Functions of Poems and Songs in Elizabethan Romance and Romantic Comedy', pp. 404–05. White notes a different but related form of transgression, the use of songs to call into question the celebration of marriage on which Shakespearean comedies typically end.

¹⁶ William C. Carroll, 'Songs of Madness: The Lyric Afterlife of Shakespeare's Poor Tom', *Shakespeare Survey*, 55 (2002), 82–95.

¹⁷ On the sources of Ophelia's songs, see Ross W. Duffin, *Shakespeare's Songbook* (New York: Norton, 2004), esp. pp. 52–53, 72–74, 407–08.

concerns a man who seduces a virgin. Michael Boyd's 2004 Royal Shakespeare Company production emphasizes the social interactions performed by this and her other songs: she addresses them directly to specified characters (in this instance, Claudius, thus clearly linking his political transgressions with sexual ones and also, more debatably, perhaps hinting at her own Oedipal scenario). The Fools are, of course, another case in point of using songs not only to express the transgressive but to communicate it to others. Through ditties that, as the text tells us, are sung, the Fool attempts to alert Lear to his mistake in surrendering power to his daughters.

How, then, does song grant a voice to otherwise marginalized Others? What gives song the power to empower? The answers, however complex and various, reside above all in three closely related mechanisms of this medium. It rewrites ontological rules through its connection to ritual. It rescripts conversational rules by substituting an alternative discursive register. And it recasts closural rules through its ability to impose an alternative ending.

First, its connections with ritual, traced so acutely by Roland Greene and Andrew Welsh among others, imbue it with quasi-magical potency.¹⁸ Though lyric is often seductive, its ritualistic properties per se are not necessarily as coercive as Greene and others assert.¹⁹ When lyric takes the form of song, however, its coerciveness sometimes intensifies and does so in significant measure through the potentialities of ritual and related practices. For singing can do for discursive space what its analogue, ritual (like game), often does for space in the more literal, geographical sense: that is, song questions or unsettles other rules and imposes its own. Many early modern playwrights were surely aware of the common Neoplatonic links between song and magic. More specifically, those connections among song, charm, and chant contribute to its ritualistic practices. Especially relevant here is how charms substitute for the quotidian practices of the workaday world their alternative etiologies, which are often rule bound — anyone touched by this flower will necessarily fall in love and so on. Shakespeare's plays are full of examples of these patterns beyond the most obvious ones like the magical lyrics in *A*

¹⁸ Roland Greene, *Post-Petrarchism: Origins and Innovations of the Western Lyric Sequence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), esp. pp. 5–13, 109–52; and Welsh, *Roots of Lyric*, esp. chap. 6.

¹⁹ On the putative coerciveness of lyric, see esp. Greene, *Post-Petrarchism*, pp. 5–6; and Ramie Targoff, *Common Prayer: The Language of Public Devotion in Early Modern England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001). For a disagreement with their position, see my *Challenges of Orpheus*, chap. 1.

Midsummer Night's Dream. The utterances of Lear's Fool manifest a type of ritualistic power, and it is both invoked and ironized in Imogen's funeral dirge.

But the potency of song relates not only to the rules established by the world of the magical or quasi-magical but also those established in and about discourse, and this gestures towards a second source of the power of song. One of its most intriguing aspects is its pre-emptive redefinition of the regulations of speech. If, as Mark W. Booth asserts, song builds a sense of communal identity, arguably the singer has the authority that derives from speaking for and with those around her.²⁰ But Booth's theory is limited by its assumption that listeners do not wish to take issue with the song and hence needs to be supplemented by the work of the anthropologist Maurice Bloch. Bloch's observation that the special status of song precludes argument or interruption is very germane to how it entitles those who might otherwise be suppressed to speak despite potential opposition.²¹ He also points out that such interruption would itself be transgressive. To put it another way, the turn-taking practices of conversation are suspended. In support of Bloch, observe that Lear does not interrupt his Fool's songs. And even if Ophelia sings an accusation directly at and about the King, as in the Michael Boyd production, he does not interrupt that vocal mousetrap as he interrupts its theatrical analogue.

Third, song plays and is played by its own rules when it concludes a play, thus again permitting an assertion of power. Characters often struggle for the right to bring about closure — which is in effect the right to have the last word in a conversation or, in a heated one, the insistence on hanging up the telephone before the other party can do so. Many of Shakespeare's dramas conclude on what might be termed 'contestatory closure' in that several characters battle to create an ending and to achieve the other types of authority that represents. Among the clearest examples is the conclusion of *King Lear* (however one resolves editorial debates about the assignment of certain speeches); similarly, at the termination of *Hamlet* Horatio and Fortinbras in effect compete for the right to end the play on their own terms, with Hamlet's team losing yet again. The final scene of *As You Like It* is an especially interesting example, since in a sense Rosalind, Hymen, Jacques, and the Duke all try to bring about closure; so too is the ending of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, where both the human characters and the fairies offer their versions of closure.

²⁰ Mark W. Booth, *The Experience of Songs* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), esp. pp. 14–17.

²¹ See Maurice Bloch's discussion of song as one type of formalized language in 'Symbols, Song, Dance and Features of Articulation: Is Religion an Extreme Form of Traditional Authority?', *Archives Européennes de Sociologie*, 15 (1974), 55–81.

Song can be an appropriate ending to a play in such contested situations because it marks that conclusion with a change in registers, in fonts. Witness Feste's final song. Like an epilogue addressing the audience, a song that they might recognize and hum under their breaths, or even join in, breaks down the separation between players and spectators in a way appropriate to the liminal moment of closure. At the same time, as R. S. White points out in a thoughtful study of songs in Elizabethan romances and comedies, in Shakespeare's texts as elsewhere a song may destabilize other forms of closure by calling into question comedic resolution. In these instances, too, singing enjoys agency and potency.²²

I have been arguing, then, that the force of ritual, the workings of everyday speech, and the operations of closure in a range of circumstances all write special rules and thus give a song a force that allows previously powerful characters to acquire agency and instrumentality; in so doing, this medium often shifts the social dynamics and especially the power hierarchies of a pre-existing situation. The work of that controversial singer of songs Freud suggests additional ways song grants agency to Others. Whereas Freud persuasively associates dreamwork with the hidden agendas of jokes, one might usefully import his insights into both those forms to create a category of songwork.²³ Thus songs, like dreams and jokes, may condense a story, as in Ophelia's lament about her father or the Fool's commentaries on Lear's relationship to his daughters. They may deflect a story by associating it with people other than the original participants; arguably Ophelia's song about the betrayed woman is a version of her own experiences with Hamlet, while Feste's final song, apparently about his own sexuality, also refers to the shenanigans of the other characters.²⁴ And, again like dreams and jokes, they may express something by seeming to say the opposite, as when Ophelia claims that young men are not to blame for seducing women and Desdemona similarly seemingly excuses male betrayal as she sings.

But if Shakespearean song bestows power on those who lack it by overturning ontological, discursive, and closural rules, as well as through its similarities to dreamwork and jokework, its own power to do so is sometimes constrained. Thus the transgression it enables may be delimited, though not as consistently as a bald subversion/containment model would lead us to expect. A song functions the way speech acts in drama function according to J. L. Austin and other speech act

²² White, 'Functions of Poems and Songs', pp. 392–405.

²³ See Sigmund Freud, *Standard Edition*, ed. by James Strachey and others, 24 vols (London: Hogarth, 1953–74), VIII, 88–89, on connections between dreamwork and jokework.

²⁴ For a valuable discussion of Feste's final song, see Booth, *Experience of Songs*, pp. 1–5, 26–28.

theorists: it denies its truth-value, surrounds its statements with an 'as if'.²⁵ In other words, Ophelia reads Derrida when Hamlet believes she is engrossed in a different type of prayer-book. For if on one level singers like her rightly imply that they are not only telling truths but telling ones of great import — 'when they ask you what it means, say you this' (IV. 5. 36–37), she insists — on another level their medium produces a signature in quotation marks. In their potentially compromised but nonetheless significant relationship to empowerment, songs, whether they be lyric or narrative, playground jingles or ballads or performed sonnets, have more in common with each other than, say, the prose romance does with the novel.

Similarly, although songs give the singer the power and authority to express radically dissonant truths, they nonetheless do not guarantee an appropriate response on the listeners' parts, a fact learned and publicly lamented by many Shakespearean characters, as well as numerous sonneteers in the early modern period. Thus too, the work of jokes may be compromised by a listener who refuses to play straight-man or replies with 'I don't get it'. A source of revelation, songs also are treated as a symptom of madness, as Dunn and Sophie Tomlinson have demonstrated, with the latter acutely adducing the Jailer's Daughter in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* as well as Ophelia.²⁶ This linkage between bursting into song and mental instability obviously reflects the ambivalences about the power of lyric traced throughout this study and in so doing provides another way the agency of singers may be circumscribed.²⁷ The ability of song to achieve closure or to challenge other forms of it may be similarly curtailed. Ending on song, as Feste does, celebrates his power — but such lyrics were in many cases followed by the jig, a rival form of music with a rival author bringing about closure. So in this sense they contributed to rather than terminated contestatory closure.

In another respect as well Shakespearean drama delimits the potency it assigns to songs. If they are often associated with powerless but sympathetic characters like Desdemona, it is striking how often they are treated ironically by being assigned to unappealing characters like Stephano or to those who at best evoke an ambivalent

²⁵ J. L. Austin, *How To Do Things With Words*, ed. by J. O. Urmson and Marina Sbisa (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), p. 22.

²⁶ Sophie Tomlinson, *Women on Stage in Stuart Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 129–55.

²⁷ The central argument of Dunn, 'Ophelia's Songs in *Hamlet*', is that the play links song to madness, irrationality, and the feminine; our interpretations differ significantly, however, inasmuch as I emphasize the significant, though limited, communicative potentiality of Ophelia's words. Also see Tomlinson, *Women on Stage in Stuart Drama*, pp. 129–55.

response, such as Caliban and Bottom — much as poems that are not necessarily sung, such as the lyrics of Orlando and the courtiers in *Love's Labour's Lost*, are mocked. Or the content rather than the speaker may be ironized and even discredited: the beautiful funeral dirge sung for Imogen in *Cymbeline* is as inappropriate as the intriguingly similar moment in the Coen brothers' film *Raising Arizona* where the convicts wail for the baby they have left in the road.

This amalgam of power and powerlessness invites us to place the songs in drama within the broader context of a linguistic form that I have elsewhere termed 'authorizers' — that is, types of speech such as riddles, stories, and prophecies that negotiate power and authority, as well as their often contested relationship.²⁸ Authorizers do so by impelling a process aimed at establishing the authority of the speaker, even, or especially, if it did not exist previously, a process that often involves first establishing and then qualifying that authority. Thus, much as a song grants power to the singer in the ways I have identified, so a riddle allows the person who poses it to determine what the appropriate answer is; but his or her status changes dramatically if the conundrum is successfully solved. And in establishing power and authority, these types of discourse, like song, typically abrogate the rules for everyday conversation and substitute their own regulations.

Desdemona's willow song exemplifies the workings of authorizers — and in so doing provides intriguing encapsulations and extensions of my arguments here as well. In the course of talking with her own maid Emilia and preparing for bed shortly before Othello kills her, Desdemona delivers a lament she heard from her mother's maid Barbary. It is a text about someone singing a song by a stream who was betrayed by a lover who, like Othello, 'prov'd mad' (IV. 3. 27). Critics have noted that the geographical locale of the area termed 'Barbary' shifts from one text to the next in the early modern period.²⁹ No less significant are the shifts in its subject positions, modes, and types of discourse.

²⁸ For a more detailed discussion of authorizers, see my essay "The tip of his seducing tongue": Authorizers in *Henry V*, "A Lover's Complaint", and *Othello*, in *Critical Essays on Shakespeare's 'A Lover's Complaint': Suffering Ecstasy*, ed. by Shirley Sharon-Zisser (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 121–36. I am also indebted to Linda Woodbridge for some useful comments in personal correspondence on the issue of authorizers. Citing Desdemona's song as an instance of authorizers, the essay also includes an early version of the argument about her in this chapter.

²⁹ On this and other issues about the passage, see Emily C. Bartels, 'Strategies of Submission: Desdemona, the Duchess, and the Assertion of Desire', *Studies in English Literature*, 36 (1996), 417–33. Bartels and I agree that the song empowers Desdemona, though she traces that effect to its content rather than to its status as a song (pp. 429–31).

Barbary sings an ‘old thing’ (line 29) sung by others; Desdemona then sings Barbary’s song and sings about Barbary singing it; the song quotes the man involved; and Emilia subsequently refers to singing it before she dies. By adding Barbary, who has no counterpart in the original ballad, and by including Emilia’s desire to repeat the song, the text enables and emphasizes these shifts in positionality. Thus it develops from a different perspective the cognate changes elsewhere within the play, notably the ways Othello comes to mirror Iago.³⁰

As that description suggests, the willow song also blends narrative and lyric. Although it is based on a very popular ballad and thus owes more to narrative than lyric, it certainly includes lyric elements as well.³¹ The narrative within the song (‘The poor soul sat [sighing] by a sycamore tree’, line 40) echoes the preceding narrative about it (‘My mother had a maid call’d Barbary [...] She had a song of “Willow”, lines 26, 28) until the two are hard to distinguish semantically, though they are distinguished by the move into the register of song; and the Russian-doll effect of stories within stories is extended by a tale within the song:

I call’d my love false love; but what said he then?
Sing willow, willow, willow;
If I court moe women, you’ll couch with moe men. (lines 55–57)

At the same time, as is so often the case, those stories introduce the lyric complaint that is being sung — ‘Sing all a green willow must be my garland’ (line 51) — and the refrain emphasizes lyricality.

These points about positionality and mode help to explain how and why Desdemona’s song, like so many other instances of its medium, enables agency. Until she sings, Desdemona has been attempting to excuse Othello. Here, albeit tentatively and obliquely, she acquires enough authority and autonomy to begin to blame him. From where does she draw and sustain the agency to challenge his plots in several senses of that noun?³² The answers are interlocking. First, the important issues about female community adumbrated earlier contribute to her power as a narrator. Second, she achieves that power in part through narrativity. Although he comments on the scene at hand only in passing, in his acute analysis of *Othello* Lloyd

³⁰ On the addition of Barbary and other changes in the text, see Ernest Brennecke, “Nay, That’s Not Next!”: The Significance of Desdemona’s “Willow Song”, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 4 (1953), 35–38.

³¹ Sources of the willow song are analysed in Duffin, *Shakespeare’s Songbook*, pp. 467–70.

³² My argument thus differs from that of Brennecke, “Nay, That’s Not Next!”, who sees the song as a product of ‘her subconscious awareness’ (p. 37).

Davis traces the instrumentality of narrative, especially the ways telling stories about the past can be an important action in its own right and one that will influence the future.³³ Desdemona, unlike many other storytellers in the play, lays claim to an instrumentality that she did not previously have, or at best had in limited form, the power to attack Othello for his betrayal of her love and the grievously unfair accusations that result. As a result, two scripts, one authorizing Desdemona and one authorizing Othello, struggle for supremacy.

Above all, however, both Desdemona's agency as a singer and its limits relate to the ways songs reinterpret rules and other social practices. The procedures of ritual replace those of everyday interactions, and one of the many functions of the refrain here is to render the utterance more ritualistic.³⁴ In a sense this song is an apotropaic charm for women, a defence against the seductions of all too charming men. We could profitably extend the arguments of earlier critics about female community, summarized above, by recognizing that in such ways singing establishes and strengthens gendered bonds. And, if, as I have suggested, songs resist interruption, this instance shows us that they may do so in part through what is the polar opposite of and a defensive strike against interruption: ensuring the repetition of their own words. Whereas Desdemona's complaint temporarily blocks the novella by Othello and his ghost writer Iago, reminding us that the power of song, like that of narrative, often derives from blocking another form of speech, it does so by means of patterns of repetition that both enact and figure the breeding of stories. In the refrain we find the most obvious instance, and that poetic device stages its own workings in the phrase 'Sing willow, willow, willow' (line 56). Desdemona gives Barbary's song currency, makes it current, much as her own song will be repeated. The streams by which she sings echo the story, though if the mirroring effect of the water figures these types of recurrence, it also reminds us that iteration

³³ Lloyd Davis, 'The Plots of *Othello*: Narrative, Desire, Selfhood', *Sydney Studies in English*, 25 (1999), 3–26, esp. p. 17.

³⁴ Other analyses of the power of song include Roland Barthes's theory of what he terms the 'grain' in the singing voice: identified in his essay with a bodily materiality, the grain plays down the literal meaning of the song and instead conveys the authority of the Father. One might question that argument in some respects (e.g. do not certain voices, notably sopranos, seem to escape materiality? do not many songs with 'grain' in Barthes's sense lack authority?) and in this instance Desdemona's authority is closely related to her ability to create meaning. But his argument does remind us how intense the impact of the singing voice can be, thus from a different perspective implicitly questioning the critical interpretations that focus on Desdemona's impotence: Roland Barthes, 'The Grain of the Voice', in *Image, Music, Text*, trans. by Stephen Heath (New York: Hill & Wang, 1977), pp. 179–89.

may involve distortion. In any event, all these echoes draw attention to the encouraging fact that Desdemona's story may be repeated just as Barbary's has been and just as Barbary herself has reproduced an old song. And, authorized in her transgressive defiance both by song itself and by Desdemona's previous deployment of it, Emilia repeats a snatch of it. A stanza from one common version of the ballad omitted from the text requests the listener to note on the singer's tomb that he was true to his love: though on one level erased, on another level that stanza becomes dramatic action in that Emilia in effect inscribes in the play an epitaph about Desdemona's chastity.

In short, the very repetitions of the song both testify and contribute to its potency: each successive singer in effect authorizes the next one to sing it, demonstrating one may control the future by ensuring that one's tale will be told again. If on the one hand the alienability of lyric demonstrates the destructive aspects of scattering, here one is reminded that both narrative and lyric may achieve power through dissemination in its most positive senses. Thus, in a play whose praxis is the contestation of rival stories and rival storytellers, Desdemona becomes not only a lyric poet, but a narrative one, telling a tale that rivals those proffered by that master and slave of narrative, Othello. She achieves this in no small measure through the iterability of song.

But if singing often involves not only the assertion but also the delimitation of authority, Desdemona's song is no exception. Reminding us of how the potency of that medium is impeded in instances like Ophelia's performance, Desdemona tellingly presents her performance in terms of lack of agency:

That song to-night
Will not go from my mind; I have much to do
But to go hang my head all at one side
And sing it like poor Barbary. (lines 30–33)

Notice that she associates singing with the pitiful physical position and lower social position of Barbary; notice too that her phraseology here transfers agency to the lyric, literally the subject of the first sentence.

Although mitigated by the act of singing, Desdemona's culturally encouraged tendency to blame herself for being a victim does not disappear: 'Let nobody blame him, his scorn I approve' (line 52). The limitations in her agency register in the limitations in the potentialities I have ascribed to song. If on one level, Desdemona's song resists interruption from other storytellers, on another level she suspends it with her own interjections. Breaking into and hence breaking apart her own song, Desdemona complicates though does not obviate the anthropological work of Bloch on the ability of song to resist interruption inasmuch as these interruptions

are partly subsumed into the tale. Nor is the ability of song to establish a rival version of closure fully achieved here; tellingly, Desdemona's song culminates on a series of questions. The only closure it achieves involves a tragic diminishment of power: as Emilia explicitly asserts, this is a swan song. Yet all these challenges to her authority do not erase the accusatory story she, like Ophelia, authorizes through song.

In short, *Othello* supports Henderson's observation about *Love's Labour's Lost* in particular: songs and singing typically participate actively in the action and the relationships among characters rather than primarily expressing the emotions of a single personage.³⁵ In so doing, I have argued, those performances bestow agency and other types of power, even if they are circumscribed. The principal reason for that achievement lies in my point about their peculiar ontological status. In diction, mood, and rhythm such songs may resemble other passages in the plays, especially intense lyrical descriptions and chants. Under these circumstances, however, Frye's radical of presentation trumps other determinants. Even as it participates in the spectrum of various types of heightened or lyricized speech, song often insists on its difference from other registers and on its ability to authorize new types of insight and to write a new set of rules.

³⁵ Henderson, *Passion Made Public*, p. 169.

FROM JEW TO PURITAN: THE EMBLEMATIC OWL IN EARLY ENGLISH CULTURE

Brett D. Hirsch

A Puritan in Northamptonshire takes offence to his neighbour's maypole and threatens to have it taken down, despite the anticipated costs of litigation. His neighbour is understandably taken aback by this confrontation, and after questioning the Puritan's authority in the matter, takes his leave and returns to his home. He emerges soon after with an owl on his arm. Turning to the Puritan, he asks him to identify the bird he is holding: 'An owl,' is the response. 'No,' says the man, 'tis a Roundhead on my fist, I hope I may call my Bird what I list.' The Puritan, fuming at this insult, brings his case before a Justice, who recognizes a man's right to name his pets and dismisses the claim.

This is the plot of *My Bird is a Round-head*, a broadside ballad printed in 1642, the infamous year in which the Puritan parliament succeeded in closing down the London theatres.¹ The ballad, which features a custom woodcut depicting the man holding his owl next to the offending maypole (Figure 6), juxtaposes one Roundhead against another: a Roundhead in the political sense (so named because of the distinctive haircut worn by the Puritan faction of parliament), and an owl, the only bird with its eyes on the front of its (round) face. The feathered Roundhead is shown to be 'a gallant Bird' (13. 5) that, unlike its Puritan namesake, 'hurteth none' (8. 5) and

meddles not with State affaires,
Or sets her neighbours by the eares,

I wish to thank Anne and Chris Wortham, Gabriel Egan, David Scott Kastan, and Bruce Boehrer for their insightful comments and suggestions.

¹ Humphrey Crouch, *My Bird is a Round-head* (London, 1642; Wing C7285B). Stanza and line references are given parenthetically in the text.



Figure 6. Woodcut of a man with an owl by a Maypole. Humphrey Crouch, *My Bird is a Round-head* (London, 1642). Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmolean H 23. By permission of the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford.

No Crosse or May-pole makes her start,
Nor can she preach in Cup or Cart;
She seekes to pull no Organs downe,
Nor on an Image casts a frowne. (9. 1–6)

Published during the early days of the Civil War, this ballad pointedly ridicules religious extremists like the Puritan who ‘with meere toyes doe trouble [their] pates’ (1. 6), fussing over such trifles as maypoles and pet owls with amusing names.²

Sectarian humour aside, the ballad is of interest because of its use of the owl — a bird routinely identified with Jews in early English culture — to symbolically represent Puritans. This chapter will explore the transmission of medieval antisemitic textual and visual narratives into early modern England, focusing on the ways in which the emblem of the owl was appropriated in charging Catholics with

² I am indebted to the pseudonymous Hieronimo of *Blogging the Renaissance* for bringing this wonderful ballad to my attention: ‘An Odd Ballad: “My Bird is a Round-head”, <<http://www.bloggingtherenaissance.blogspot.com/2006/04/odd-ballad-my-bird-is-round-head.html>> [accessed 25 June 2006].

judaizing during the various Reformations, through to its later adaptation as part of the stigmatization of Puritans as Jews in the seventeenth century.³

The Jews in Medieval England and their Cultural Legacy

Scholarly consensus is that Jews migrated to England in substantial numbers only after the Norman Conquest in the late eleventh century,⁴ although it has been suggested that there is evidence of their presence as early as the Roman period.⁵ In many ways, the experience of medieval English Jewry was no different from that of their brethren in other parts of Christendom: theirs was a life dogged by State- and Church-sponsored sanctions, suspicion and hostility, and social and economic restrictions designed to humiliate and alienate, culminating in their wholesale expulsion in 1290.

However, England was also to herald a number of firsts in the history of Christian–Jewish relations. England was the first country in Europe to vigorously enforce the wearing of the Jew Badge only three years after the Fourth Lateran Council had instituted it in 1215:

Whereas in certain provinces of the Church the difference in their clothes sets the Jews and Saracens apart from the Christians, in certain other lands there has arisen such confusion that no differences are noticeable. Thus it sometimes happens that by mistake Christians have intercourse with Jewish or Saracen women, and Jews or Saracens with Christian women. Therefore, lest these people, under the cover of an error, find an excuse for the grave sin of such intercourse, we decree that these people (Jews and Saracens) of either sex, and in all Christian lands, and at all times, shall easily be distinguishable from

³ This chapter follows Anthony Bale in preferring *antisemitism* to *anti-Judaism*, since the narratives under consideration here do not refer to ‘real’ Jews but ‘only deprecatory non-Jewish ideas about Jews’, as opposed to narratives that aim to attack *real* Jews or the Jewish religion on a practical level. Likewise, the term has not been hyphenated since ‘outside linguistics, there is no such thing as a Semite; it is only a negative category forced onto Jews, and others’: Anthony Bale, *The Jew in the Medieval Book: English Antisemitisms, 1350–1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 3.

⁴ Representative studies include Andrew P. Scheil, *The Footsteps of Israel: Understanding Jews in Anglo-Saxon England* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004); Cecil Roth, *A History of the Jews in England*, 3rd edn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964); Albert M. Hyamson, *A History of the Jews in England* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1908); and Joseph Jacobs, *The Jews of Angevin England* (London: David Nutt, 1893).

⁵ Shimon Applebaum, ‘Were There Jews in Roman Britain?’, *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England*, 17 (1951–52), 189–205.

the rest of the population by the quality of their clothes; especially since such legislation is imposed upon them also by Moses.⁶

Literary scholars have long recognized possible echoes of this legislation in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, where Shylock refers to his 'Jewish gaberdine' (440, I. 3. 111), or even, more loosely, to 'the badge of all [his] Tribe' (438, I. 3. 109).⁷ Whether such readings are persuasive or not, it is interesting to note that the requirement of wearing the badge — and later the *pileum cornutum*, the pointed or horned Jewish hat prescribed by the Council of Vienna in 1267 — was 'enforced earlier and more consistently in England than in any other country of Europe',⁸ a fact that has led Janet Adelman to insightfully reflect that

By the time of *Merchant*, Christian societies had been worrying about the instability of Jewish difference for generations. Jews, for example, are generally depicted throughout the Middle Ages as physically unmistakable, with red or black curly hair, large noses, dark skin, and the infamous *foetor judaicus*, the bad smell that identified them as Jews. But apparently Jews could not be counted on to be reliably different: although allegedly physically unmistakable, Jews throughout Europe were nonetheless required to wear particular styles of clothing or badges that graphically enforced their physical unmistakability — as though they were not quite different *enough*.⁹

Jewish opposition was not only figured in physiological terms, but found concrete physical expression in the widely circulated narratives detailing the Jewish desecration of the Eucharistic Host,¹⁰ the murder of Christian children in mockery of the Passion, and the use of Christian blood for ritual purposes. The first documented case of the charge of Ritual Murder is that of William of Norwich in 1144,

⁶ As reprinted in Steven F. Kruger, 'Conversion and Medieval Sexual, Religious, and Racial Categories', in *Constructing Medieval Sexuality*, ed. by Karma Lochrie, Peggy McCracken, and James A. Schultz (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp. 158–79 (p. 168).

⁷ All references to Shakespeare are taken from the First Folio of 1623, and are cited parenthetically throughout as Through Line Numbers from the *Norton Facsimile*, 2nd edn (New York: Norton, 1996), ed. by Charles Hinman, followed by corresponding act, scene, and line references from William Shakespeare, *Complete Works*, ed. by Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

⁸ Roth, *History of the Jews in England*, p. 95.

⁹ Janet Adelman, 'Her Father's Blood: Race, Conversion, and Nation in *The Merchant of Venice*', *Representations*, 81 (2003), 4–30 (p. 10, emphasis original).

¹⁰ For a thorough examination of the Host-desecration narrative, see Miri Rubin, *Gentile Tales: The Narrative Assault on Late Medieval Jews* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).

over a quarter of a century before the charges are recorded on the Continent.¹¹ Further allegations are recorded in Gloucester (1168), Bury St Edmunds (1181), Bristol (1183), Winchester (1191), London (1244), and, most famously, in Lincoln (1255).¹² The story of Little St Hugh of Lincoln served as Chaucer's source for the *Prioress's Tale* and has attracted much scholarly attention.¹³ The boy's remains were interred in a shrine in Lincoln Cathedral, 'where the relics were venerated down to the time of the Reformation', and his story inspired popular ballads and entered the cultural memory of England.¹⁴ It is clear that readers in early modern England were aware of these stories, since they are to be found in popular martyrologies and chronicles. For example, both William of Norwich and Little St Hugh of Lincoln are reported in John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* and

¹¹ Roth, *History of the Jews in England*, pp. 9–11. For a more detailed discussion of the ritual-murder accusation, see the useful collection of essays in *The Blood Libel Legend: A Casebook in Anti-Semitic Folklore*, ed. by Alan Dundes (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991). Other important studies include R. Po-chia Hsia, *The Myth of Ritual Murder: Jews and Magic in Reformation Germany* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988); and Joshua Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews: The Medieval Conception of the Jew and its Relation to Modern Antisemitism* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1984). On William of Norwich, see Gavin I. Langmuir, 'Thomas of Monmouth: Detector of Ritual Murder', *Speculum*, 59 (1984), 820–46; and John M. McCulloh, 'Jewish Ritual Murder: William of Norwich, Thomas of Monmouth, and the Early Dissemination of the Myth', *Speculum*, 72 (1997), 698–740.

¹² For a more detailed discussion of these cases, see Anthony Bale, 'Fictions of Judaism in England before 1290', in *The Jews in Medieval Britain: Historical, Literary and Archaeological Perspectives*, ed. by Patricia Skinner (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2003), pp. 129–44; and Joe Hillaby, 'The Ritual Child Murder Accusation: Its Dissemination and Harold of Gloucester', *Jewish Historical Studies*, 34 (1994–96), 69–106.

¹³ Representative recent studies include Catherine S. Cox, *The Judaic Other in Dante, the Gawain Poet, and Chaucer* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005); Roger Dahood, 'The Punishment of the Jews, Hugh of Lincoln, and the Question of Satire in Chaucer's *Prioress's Tale*', *Viator*, 36 (2005), 465–91; Lisa Lampert, *Gender and Jewish Difference from Paul to Shakespeare* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), chap. 3; Sheila Delany, 'Chaucer's Prioress, the Jews, and the Muslims', *Medieval Encounters*, 5 (1999), 198–213; and Denise L. Depres, 'Cultic Anti-Judaism and Chaucer's Little Clergeon', *Modern Philology*, 91 (1994), 413–27. For a more detailed discussion of Little St Hugh of Lincoln, see Gavin I. Langmuir, 'The Knight's Tale of Young Hugh of Lincoln', *Speculum*, 47 (1972), 459–82. There have been studies of the other child martyrs — in particular Robert of Bury, who is referred to in a poem by Lydgate — but they have not received the same level of scholarly attention. These studies include Bale, *The Jew in the Medieval Book*, chap. 4; and Lisa Lampert, 'The Once and Future Jew: The Croxton Play of the Sacrament, Little Robert of Bury and Historical Memory', *Jewish History*, 15 (2001), 235–55.

¹⁴ Roth, *History of the Jews in England*, pp. 56–57.

John Wilson's *The English Martyrologe*, as well as in the collaborative *Epitome of Chronicles* and Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles*,¹⁵ with other accounts found in works by John Merbecke, John Stow, John Donne, and John Weever.¹⁶ Roy Booth has provocatively suggested that the shadow of these child martyrs lingers over the immediate reception of Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, arguing that Nerissa's safe return from the Jew's house (disguised as a boy clerk) indicates 'in an undemonstrative way that Shylock's threat has been completely nullified'.¹⁷ Booth also argues persuasively, by close examination of contemporary ballads and an episode in Thomas Nashe's *Unfortunate Traveller*, for the existence of a 'lurid fiction' and 'pattern' that perceives 'the Jew's house as a trap for Christians'.¹⁸ It is entirely plausible that Shakespeare's original audiences may have expected something more sinister from this off-stage encounter with Shylock.

Later versions of these allegations took on an additional element of cruelty and depravity, combining the traditional charge of ritual murder with what has come to be known as the Blood Libel — the accusation that the Jews required Christian blood for ritual purposes.¹⁹ Beginning on the Continent, the blood libel soon reached England and tainted the memory of the child martyrs, and was added to the corpus of charges laid against the Jews. For example, as part of his sermon on Christmas Day, 1625, John Donne argued that the truth of Christianity was so convincing that even the Jews

¹⁵ John Foxe, *Actes and Monuments* (London, 1570; STC 11223), y4^r, N1^v; John Wilson, *The English Martyrologe* (London, 1608; STC 25771), E7^v–E8^r, N6^v–N7^r; Thomas Lanquet, Thomas Cooper, and Robert Crowley, *An Epitome of Chronicles* (London, 1559; STC 15217.5), 3F4^r, 3G4^v, 3H^r, 3I4^r; Raphael Holinshed, *The Third Volume of Chronicles* (London, 1587; STC 13569), p. 56, p. 219.

¹⁶ John Merbecke, *A Booke of Notes and Common Places* (London, 1581; STC 17299), 2L6^{r-v}; John Stow, *A Suruay of London* (London, 1598; STC 23341), C8^r; John Donne, *Pseudo-Martyr* (London, 1610; STC 7048), 2K1^r; John Weever, *Ancient Funerall Monuments* (London, 1631; STC 25223), 2K3^r.

¹⁷ Roy Booth, 'Shylock's Sober House', *Review of English Studies*, 50 (1999), 22–31 (p. 23).

¹⁸ Booth, 'Shylock's Sober House', pp. 26–27.

¹⁹ On the blood libel in general, see the already cited collection of essays in *The Blood Libel Legend*, ed. by Dundes. Other important studies include Hsia, *The Myth of Ritual Murder*; and Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews*, pp. 140–58; Cecil Roth, 'The Feast of Purim and the Origins of the Blood Accusation', *Speculum*, 8 (1933), 520–26; and Hermann L. Strack, *The Jew and Human Sacrifice: An Historical and Sociological Inquiry*, trans. by Henry Blanchamp (London: Cope & Fenwick, 1909).

express a kinde of conditionall acknowledgement of it, by this barbarous and inhumane custome of theirs, that they alwayes keep in readinesse the blood of some Christian, with which they anoint the body of any that dyes amongst them, with these words, if Jesus were the Messias, then may the blood of this Christian availle thee to salvation.²⁰

For Donne, 'so by their doubt, and their implied consent',²¹ the ritual use of Christian blood becomes proof that the Jews secretly acknowledge Christ as the Messiah — or, at least, that they are willing to hedge their bets.

Another important development to emerge in England was the iconographic representation of Moses with horns. In her monumental study, *The Horned Moses in Medieval Art and Thought*, Ruth Mellinkoff finds that 'the earliest artistic representation thus far found of horns on Moses is in eleventh-century England',²² pointing to a number of manuscript illuminations and sculptures, such as the statue of Moses from St Mary's Abbey in York. Although more famous works existed on the Continent, such as Michelangelo's sculpture in the Church of San Pietro in Vincoli in Rome, the catalogue of examples collected by Mellinkoff indicates that the motif was quite popular in medieval England.

Why was Moses depicted with horns? The phenomenon stands as one of the great moments of being lost in translation. Henry Ainsworth, glossing Exodus 34. 29, explained that

The Latine version [the Vulgate] saith, *Moses face was horned*; mistaking the word: for the Hebrew *Karan*, which is *to shine*, or cast forth glorious beames, the name *Keren* or *Horne* is derived: in which sense the Latine translated it here, and gave occasion to the ignorant, to paint Moses face with two hornes like an Oxe, whereby this glorious mystery hath been obscured, and turned to a fable.²³

It is only after the production of the Geneva Bible in 1560 that references to Moses' horns were purged from this passage.²⁴ Other post-Reformation authors in England were quick to assign this error to the Catholics: John Boys wrote that 'the

²⁰ John Donne, *LXXX Sermons* (London, 1640; STC 7038), p. 21.

²¹ Donne, *LXXX Sermons*, p. 21.

²² Ruth Mellinkoff, *The Horned Moses in Medieval Art and Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), p. 13.

²³ Henry Ainsworth, *Annotations Upon the Five Bookes of Moses* (London, 1627; STC 219), 2M6^v.

²⁴ James Strachan, *Early Bible Illustrations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957), p. 14. For example, the Great Bible of 1540 gives 'And Moses wist not that the skynne of his face shone in maner of an horne, whyle he talked with him', while the Geneva Bible reads 'Moses wist not that the skinne of his face shone bright, after that God had talked with him'.

common painters among the Papists' paint Moses with two horns 'as a cuckold, to the great scandall of Christian religion'.²⁵ Andrew Willet, on the other hand, noted that as a result of this 'common errour [...] the Jewes deride the Christians', since in doing so they 'picture *Moses* with hornes, more like a Devill, than a man'.²⁶ Willet's comment touches on another important association — that of the Devil and the Jews — one that was familiar in medieval and early modern Europe, and has been sufficiently discussed elsewhere.²⁷ Indeed, the pointed or horned hat that Jews were forced to wear only reinforced this diabolic affiliation.

As these many examples indicate, medieval English attitudes towards the Jews found their expression in graphic and literary narratives, often developing new forms and motifs that would later become popular on the Continent. Even though the Jews were expelled in 1290, these narratives remained in cultural memory — the Jewish presence was felt in England long before their de facto readmission under Cromwell in the 1650s.

The Emblematic Owl

Since antiquity, the symbol of the owl has embodied a variety of meanings. In classical antiquity the owl was associated with Pallas Athena/Minerva, and was therefore a symbol of wisdom and knowledge. The pair was a popular motif in the Renaissance as a result of the humanist project to rekindle the intellectual and aesthetic flames of classical antiquity — despite the claim by Marija Gimbutas that the Renaissance knew only a single classical representation of Athena/Minerva and her owl.²⁸ While Athena/Minerva is often depicted without her feathered companion in Renaissance art, the pair appeared in emblem books,²⁹ and numerous

²⁵ John Boys, *An Exposition of the Dominical Epistles and Gospels* (London, 1610; STC 3458), 2G3^v.

²⁶ Andrew Willet, *Hexapla in Genesin & Exodum* (London, 1633; STC 25685), 3N2^r.

²⁷ For a more detailed discussion of the association between the Devil and the Jews, see Debra Higgs Strickland, *Saracens, Demons, and Jews: Making Monsters in Medieval Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), pp. 95–155; and Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews*, pp. 11–53.

²⁸ Marija Gimbutas, *The Language of the Goddess* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1989), pp. 190–95. For a discussion of classical motifs in Renaissance art, see Malcolm Bull, *The Mirror of the Gods: How the Renaissance Rediscovered the Pagan Gods* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

²⁹ For example, Andrea Alciato, *Emblemata* (Leiden, 1591), emblem 17, 'Prudens magis quam loquax' (C2^v); Guillaume de la Perrière, *Morosophie* (Lyon, 1553), emblems 18 (D6^v–D7^r), 49

references are found in poems,³⁰ plays,³¹ and other printed matter in early modern England.³² That the owl represents wisdom, whether accompanied by Athena/Minerva or not, is a commonplace that extends to our own time, and numerous examples can be found in early English literature.³³

While the wise owl of classical antiquity was clearly absorbed into later cultures, so too were its more negative symbolic connotations. In medieval iconography, the owl's classical association with wisdom was literally turned on its head: the once wise owl came to represent folly and false wisdom, particularly in depictions of the

(H5^v–H6^r), 90 (N6^v–N7^r), and 98 (O6^v–O7^r); Joannes Sambucus, *Emblemata* (Antwerp, 1564), 'Persei fabula' (pp. 148–49) and 'Iudicium Paridis' (pp. 152–53); and George Wither, *A Collection of Emblemes, Ancient and Moderne* (London, 1635; STC 25900a–d), emblem 9 (C1^r).

³⁰ In Samuel Daniel's poem, *The Civile Wars Between the Howses of Lancaster and Yorke* (London, 1609; STC 6245), a marginal gloss of 'Mineruas bird' (2. 100. 1) reads, 'The Owle is said to bee *Mineruas* bird' (p. 58). Sonnet XVII in Thomas Watson's *Hekatompathia or Passionate Centurie of Loue* (London, 1582; STC 25118a), asks 'why *Venus* likes the *Doue*; | Or why the *Owle* befits *Mineruaes* grace' (C1^r).

³¹ For example, Phineas Fletcher's pastoral drama, *Sicelides* (London, 1631; STC 11083), originally intended as an entertainment for King James during his visit to Cambridge in 1615, has the lustful old fisherman Fredocaldo announce that it is 'Owle-light, *Mineruaes* waggoner' (H2^v) at the beginning of Act IV, scene 4.

³² Robert Greene in particular was fond of referring to Minerva's owl: see *Morando the Tritameron of Loue* (London, 1584; STC 12276), D1^v; *Euphues his Censure to Philantus* (London, 1587; STC 12239), L1^r; and *Greenes Farewell to Folly* (London, 1591; STC 12241), C1^v. Minerva's owl also appears in Peter Lowe's dedication to James VI in his medical treatise, *The Whole Course of Chirurgerie* (London, 1597; STC 16869.5), A2^v; Robert Kittowe's prose romance, *Loues Load-Starre Liuely Deciphered* (London, 1600; STC 15026), F2^v; and John Selden's encyclopaedic *Titles of Honor* (London, 1614; STC 22177), p. 155 (Book 1, Chapter 7). Numerous and earlier examples are found on the Continent, such as the woodcut of Pallas with her owl in the first printed edition of Giovanni Boccaccio's *De Claris Mulieribus* (Ulm, 1473), 8^v.

³³ In the anonymous medieval debate-poem, *The Owl and the Nightingale*, the owl argues that she is wise because she guards herself with plain truth, while the verbose nightingale 'hauest to monie tale' and should give her tongue a rest (lines 255–64). The owl is also wise because she avoids quarreling with fools (like the nightingale) by staying in her nest during the day (lines 281–94). References to *The Owl and the Nightingale* are to *The Owl and the Nightingale*, ed. by J. H. G. Grattan and G. F. H. Sykes (London: Early English Text Society, 1935). Michael Drayton's *The Owle* (London, 1604; STC 7212), a 'general satire on man', identifies the owl as 'partly the voice of wisdom, partly that of Drayton himself fulfilling what he believed to be one of the sacred roles of the poet': Richard F. Hardin, *Michael Drayton and the Passing of Elizabethan England* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1973), pp. 78–79.

figure of Nobody with his winged cap or an owl nesting on his head.³⁴ The medieval interest in etymology also brought the bird's long-standing association with death and sorrow to new light. Although the terminology was often confused and conflated — particularly in bestiaries — medieval authors distinguished four types of owl, drawing on Pliny and ultimately Aristotle: the screech owl (*ulula* or *strix*), the horned owl (*bubo*), the night owl or little owl (*noctua*), and the night raven (*nycticorax*). According to Isidore of Seville, both the *ulula* and *bubo* are so named because their calls resemble weeping, wailing, and lamentation,³⁵ and later authors would repeat this description.³⁶

As a nocturnal bird with a haunting cry, often found in 'olde Sepulchres, and in Housen or Barnes not often frequented, and in cauernes or holes or stone walles' as in crypts and graveyards,³⁷ perhaps it was inevitable that the owl would be perceived as an ill omen and harbinger of death. According to Book 5 of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Proserpine turned Ascalaphus into a 'skreching Owle' for 'blabbing ungraciously' that she had eaten pomegranate seeds, thus ensuring her return to Hades.³⁸ The identification of the owl as 'a cursed Birde' and a 'messenger of Mo[u]rning' (*nuntia luctus*) in Ovid was a commonplace echoed by many later authors.³⁹ In Shakespeare alone, the shrieking of an owl heralds the murder of

³⁴ On the figure of Nobody, see Gerta Calmann, 'The Picture of Nobody: An Iconographical Study', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 23 (1960), 60–104.

³⁵ Isidore of Seville, *Etymologies*, ed. by Stephen A. Barney and others (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 12. 7. 38–39. Isidore writes that the *noctua* is named 'because it flies around at night' and 'cannot see during the day', and is distinguished from the *bubo* on account of its smaller size (12. 7. 40). The *nycticorax*, likewise, 'flees the light and cannot bear to look at sunlight' (12. 7. 41).

³⁶ Bartholomaeus Anglicus repeats Isidore's description of the *bubo* and extends it to the *ulula* because of its cry: *De proprietatibus rerum*, 12. 5; 12. 36.

³⁷ John Maplet, *A Greene Forest, or a Naturall Historie* (London, 1567; STC 17296), N8^v. The owl frequenting corpses, crypts, and sepulchres is repeated in Alciato's *Emblemata*, emblem 116, 'Senex puellam amans' (17^r).

³⁸ Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, ed. by and trans. by Arthur Golding (London, 1567; STC 18956), K1^r, 5. 538–50.

³⁹ Geoffrey Chaucer was particularly fond of using the owl as an evil portent: see *The Legend of Good Women*, in which 'the oule al nyght aboute the balkes wond, | That prophete is of wo and of myschaunce' (lines 2253–54); *The Parliament of Fowles*, where 'the oule ek, that of deth the bode bryngeth' (line 343); and Book V of *Troilus and Criseyde*, in which Troilus bemoans, 'Al certeynly that I mot nedes dye. | The owle ek, which that hette Escaphilo, | Hath after me shrigh al thise nyghtes two' (lines 318–20). References to Chaucer are to *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by

Duncan in *Macbeth* (650, 667; II. 2. 3, 15), the forceful seduction of Adonis in *Venus and Adonis* (line 531), and Tarquin's lustful advances in *The Rape of Lucrece* (line 165).⁴⁰

The association of the owl with prophecy and with folly was combined during the late Elizabethan and Jacobean debates about judicial astrology. As Nandini Das has argued, the growing appeal of astrology in post-Reformation England can be linked to 'the loss of the relics and the saints' of the old faith, resulting in a 'large void in the social machinery' that had previously served to assure the individual in times of strife and uncertainty. In place of these earlier practices, 'the increasing circulation of cheap, mass-produced almanacs and prognostications fed and nurtured a growing popular demand for the assurances offered by astrology'.⁴¹ At the same time, the popularity of these almanacs made them easy targets for burlesque and satire, whether ridicule was aimed at the authors or at astrology in general.⁴²

Larry D. Benson, 3rd edn (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987). In *The Faerie Queene* (London, 1590; STC 23081), Edmund Spenser refers to 'the messenger of death, the ghastly owle' (E3^v, 1. 5. 30) and the 'ill-faste Owle, deaths dreadfull messengere' (2A3^v, 2. 12. 36).

⁴⁰ There are other instances in Shakespeare linking the owl to death: in *1 Henry VI*, Talbot is called an 'ominous and fearefull Owle of death, | Our Nations terror, and their bloody scourge' (1965–66, IV. 2. 15–16) by one of the Dauphin's generals; in *3 Henry VI*, by then a prisoner in the Tower, Henry tells Richard that 'The Owle shriek'd at thy birth, an euill signe' (3118, v. 6. 44) before he is murdered by Richard; and, following the revels in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Robin sweeps up with a broom 'Whil'st the scritch-owle, scritch'ing loud, | Puts the wretch that lies in woe, | In remembrance of a shrowd' (2159–61, v. 2. 6–8). Writing on *Hamlet*, Robert Tracy makes a compelling argument about Ophelia's comment that 'the Owle was a Bakers daughter' (2784–85, IV. 5. 41–42) is not only a foreshadowing of her imminent death, but suggests also her loss of virginity: 'The Owl and the Baker's Daughter: A Note on *Hamlet*', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 17 (1966), 83–86.

⁴¹ Nandini Das, *Robert Greene's Planetomachia* (1585) (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), p. xxv.

⁴² Perhaps the most infamous case in point is that of Richard Harvey, whose failed predictions attracted censure and ridicule in books, ballads, and university drama. On the debate about judicial astrology in England, with a discussion of the Harvey affair, see Don Cameron Allen, *The Star-Crossed Renaissance* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1941), esp. chaps 3–5. Other representative studies of astrology in early modern England include Lauren Kassell, *Medicine and Magic in Elizabethan London: Simon Forman, Astrologer, Alchemist, and Physician* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005); Anne Geneva, *Astrology and the Seventeenth Century Mind: William Lilly and the Language of the Stars* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995); Patrick Curry, *Prophecy and Power: Astrology in Early Modern England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989); Bernard Capp, *English Almanacs, 1500–1800: Astrology and the Popular Press* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979); and Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971).



Figure 7. Title-page woodcut, *The Owles Almanacke* (London, 1618).

By permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.

One such parody is *The Owles Almanacke* (London, 1618; STC 6515), now ascribed to Thomas Middleton,⁴³ which includes a custom title-page woodcut of an owl in scholarly garb scribbling his arcane prognostications in his study (Figure 7). The owl's various predictions for the year — that Ash Wednesday will fall 'on a Wednesday' (C1^r) and that 'More stinking breaths will be begotten by Tobacco this yeare, than children' (E3^r) — are as ridiculous as the

owl's appearance in the woodcut. Drawing upon the owl's symbolic association with prophecy and with folly, the author of the *Almanacke* selected the most suitable candidate for his project to tar and feather astrologers and astrology.

Another lasting influence on the perception of the owl as a negative symbol came from the Bible. In Leviticus 11, the owl is listed among the birds that are unclean and detestable and, in the words of the Bishops' Bible, 'ought not to be eaten, for they are an abhominacyon'.⁴⁴ The belief that the owl was unclean was perpetuated in medieval bestiaries and stories, where the bird was accused of fouling its own nest.⁴⁵ That the owl was often to be found skulking around crypts

⁴³ Neil Rhodes, 'The Owl's Almanac', in *Thomas Middleton and Early Modern Textual Culture*, ed. by Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 400–02.

⁴⁴ Evidently this biblical injunction was not enough to dissuade John Schroder, doctor of physic, from prescribing the flesh of the owl to cure 'the Paralytick, Melancholick, and the like', and the 'gall' and 'grease' of the owl as 'good against the spots of the eyes' and to sharpen vision: *Zoologia, or, the History of Animals as they are Useful in Physick and Chirurgery* (London, 1658; Wing S899), H4^r.

⁴⁵ This is one of the charges made by the nightingale in *The Owl and the Nightingale*, ed. by Grattan and Sykes (lines 90–105). John Gower's *Confessio Amantis* also refers to the owl befouling

and cemeteries could only have reinforced this perception. Indeed, the natural observation of owls being mobbed by smaller birds when they made the mistake of venturing out during the day was taken to be an indication of the hatred the owl inspired in other birds.⁴⁶ Elsewhere, the Bible continued the owl's association with mourning: in his sorrow, Job is 'a companion to owles', his 'organe', like theirs, turned 'into the voyce of them that weepe'.⁴⁷

Christian iconography was quick to appropriate the owl, a bird that lent itself nicely as an emblem of sin. As Jean Lambert has neatly summarized, on the one hand, the owl's 'night vision and daylight blindness suggested moral turpitude and religious blasphemy', while on the other, its 'daytime concealment indicated a turning away from and ignorance of the everyday affairs of the world'.⁴⁸ Thus, the owl was routinely employed as the exemplum of the sin of sloth, since, in the words of John Maplet, the 'sluggard sleepeth all day long' despite having 'feathers inough to flie abroad day and night'.⁴⁹ In addition, the owl's shunning of daylight

its own roost (3. 585–86). References to Gower are to *Complete Works*, ed. by G. C. Macaulay (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901).

⁴⁶ The nightingale states that the owl is hated and mobbed by other birds in *The Owl and the Nightingale*, ed. by Grattan and Sykes (lines 60–70). This observation had been put to practical use since antiquity by fowlers, who used real and stuffed owls as bait: see Bartholomaeus, *De proprietatibus rerum*, 12. 5. The use of the owl to bait and trap was also used in allegories on lust and the folly of love in Germany and the Netherlands: see Keith P. F. Moxey, 'Master E. S. and the Folly of Love', *Simiolus*, 11 (1980), 125–48 (esp. pp. 134–37).

⁴⁷ Job 30, taken from the King James Version. Sixteenth-century English translations of both Job 30 and Micah 1 — including the Bishops' Bible, Coverdale Bible, Douay-Rheims Bible, Geneva Bible, Great Bible, and Matthew Bible — give 'ostriches' instead of 'owls'.

⁴⁸ Jean Lambert, 'Expounding the Owl: Ben Jonson's *The Masque of Owls*', *Ben Jonson Journal*, 15 (2008), 19–53 (p. 20). Lambert goes on to suggest that the identification of the owl as 'heresy-monger' occurs in Alciato's *Emblemata*, which 'iconographically situates the sepulchral screech-owl among those condemned for religious non-conformity and superstitious beliefs' (p. 21). While the owl is certainly often figured as an emblem of sin, heresy, and religious non-conformity, Lambert's assertion that this is present in Alciato is difficult to sustain. Neither of the two emblems containing owls employ the bird in this way: emblem 17 ('Prudens magis quam loquax') simply describes the wise owl replacing the garrulous crow as Minerva's counsel, whereas emblem 116 ('Senex puellam amans') has a jealous rival (Archippus) comparing the coupling of an old man (Sophocles) with a young woman (Aganippe) to a night owl sitting on a tombstone (*noctua ut in tumulis*) or a horned owl perching on a corpse (*super utq[ue] cadauera bubo*).

⁴⁹ Maplet, *A Greene Forest*, N8^v. This is not to say that the owl was not characterized as idle in pre-Christian thought: for instance, Ovid calls the owl sluggish (*ignauus bubo*) in his *Metamorphoses*, 5. 550.

paralleled the rejection of Christ by ignorant sinners, obstinate heretics, and the godless, a parallel often highlighted in medieval bestiaries: the caption to the owl illustration in a thirteenth-century *aviarium* (London, British Library, MS Sloane 278), '*infelix bubo: peccator homo*' (fol. 31^v), is a succinct and representative example.⁵⁰

The symbolic identification of the owl with sinners in general in medieval visual culture was often refocused to represent the Jews in particular: just as the owl shuns the daylight and prefers the night, so too the Jews obstinately reject Christ and remain in the darkness of ignorance. As with the allegorical figure of Synagoga, blinded by a veil or fallen crown, the owl personified the blindness of the Jews.⁵¹ The owl's reputation as a filthy bird that soiled its own nest also resonated with antisemitic narratives linking the Jews to faeces, whether in the belief that the Jews had an offensive stench (*foetor judaicus*),⁵² or in the popular tale of the Jew of Tewkesbury, an event reported to have occurred in 1257:

⁵⁰ A notable exception to this general scheme is in the Aberdeen Bestiary (Aberdeen University Library, MS 24). While both *bubo* and *noctua* (fols 50^r–51^r) are aligned with sinners, the *nycticorax* and its love of darkness is identified with Christ, who shuns vainglory and abides with sinners in order to convert them (fol. 35^v). This identification is expanded to all righteous men who, like the owl keeps watch at night, are vigilant against sin and sinners (fol. 36^v).

⁵¹ The depiction of Synagoga defeated by Ecclesia was conventional in medieval religious art. In medieval England, representations of the pair in statues and stained glass appeared in Canterbury, Lincoln, Peterborough, and Rochester cathedrals. For a more detailed discussion of Synagoga/Ecclesia in medieval texts and art, see Margaret Schlauch, 'The Allegory of Church and Synagogue', *Speculum*, 13 (1939), 448–64; Lewis Edwards, 'Some English Examples of the Medieval Representation of Church and Synagogue', *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England*, 18 (1958), 63–77; Wolfgang S. Seiferth, *Synagogue and Church in the Middle Ages: Two Symbols in Art and Literature*, trans. by Lee Chadeayne and Paul Gottwald (New York: Ungar, 1970); Heinz Schreckenberg, *The Jews in Christian Art: An Illustrated History*, trans. by John Bowden (New York: Continuum, 1996), chap. 3; Pamela Berger, 'The Roots of Anti-Semitism in Medieval Visual Imagery: An Overview', *Religion and the Arts*, 4 (2000), 4–42; and Christine M. Rose, 'The Jewish Mother-in-Law: Synagoga and the *Man of Law's Tale*', in *Chaucer and the Jews: Sources, Contexts, Meanings*, ed. by Sheila Delany (New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 3–24. On Jewish blindness, see Lampert, *Gender and Jewish Difference from Paul to Shakespeare*, chap. 2; and Edward Wheatley, '"Blind" Jews and Blind Christians: Metaphors of Marginalization in Medieval Europe', *Exemplaria*, 14 (2002), 351–82.

⁵² The belief in the *foetor judaicus* was known in England, and apparently widespread enough for Thomas Browne to devote a chapter to refuting the charge 'that Jews stinck naturally' in his *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* (London, 1646; Wing B5159), 2C1^r–2C3^r.

A certain Jew [...] fell into a priuy at Tewkesbury vpon a sabboth day, which for the great reuerence he had to his holy sabboth, would not suffer him selfe to be plucked out. And so Lord Richard Earle of Glocester, hearing therof, would not suffer him to be drawne out on Sundaye for reuerence of the holy day. And thus the wretched superstitious Jewe remayning there tyll mondaye, was found dead in the doung.⁵³

Although not evident in English culture, the contemporary German *Judensau* motif, with its depiction of Jews suckling a sow and feeding on her excrement, graphically reinforced this link.⁵⁴

The identification of the Jews with bodily effluvia and waste has not escaped the attention of literary critics. For David Katz, the belief that Jewish men menstruated suggests that Shylock's question, 'if you pricke vs doe we not bleede?' (1275–76, III. 1. 59–60), may have been interpreted as highlighting his Jewish difference, rather than as an expression of a shared humanity with his Christian interlocutors.⁵⁵ Similarly, Jonathan Gil Harris has offered a provocative reading of Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*, where Barabas adopts the role of the excremental Jew, 'gain[ing] entry to the body politic through apertures that are subtly coded as its anus'.⁵⁶

In the textual and visual narratives of early English culture, the owl's affinity with the Jews extended beyond their shared blindness and filthiness. As Mariko Miyazaki has shown, images of owls in medieval bestiaries often reveal 'a focused attempt to anthropomorphize the bird' in such a way that it 'bears an unmistakable

⁵³ Foxe, *Actes and Monuments*, N1^v. The story is also reported in John Stow, *A Summarie of Englyshe Chronicles* (London, 1565; STC 23319), M3^r; Phillip Stubbes, *The Anatomie of Abuses* (London, 1583; STC 23377), M8^v; Nicolas Bownde, *The Doctrine of the Sabbath* (London, 1595; STC 3436), Q1^r; and the second edition of Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* (Oxford, 1624; STC 4160), 3. 4. 1. 4 (3Z2^v). Joan Young Gregg includes the tale as part of her collection of medieval exempla on Jews, noting continental variants as well as its use in a thirteenth-century French commentary on canon law: *Devils, Women, and Jews: Reflections of the Other in Medieval Sermon Stories* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), pp. 214–16. For an insightful discussion of the tale and its reception in medieval England, see Bale, *The Jew in the Medieval Book*, chap. 2.

⁵⁴ On the *Judensau* motif, see Isaiah Shachar, *The Judensau: A Medieval Anti-Jewish Motif and its History* (London: Warburg Institute, 1974).

⁵⁵ David S. Katz, 'Shylock's Gender: Jewish Male Menstruation in Early Modern England', *Review of English Studies*, 50 (1999), 440–62. On the Jewish male menses, see Willis Johnson, 'The Myth of Jewish Male Menses', *Journal of Medieval History*, 24 (1998), 273–95; and Irven M. Resnick, 'Medieval Roots of the Myth of Jewish Male Menses', *Harvard Theological Review*, 93 (2000), 241–63.

⁵⁶ Jonathan Gil Harris, 'Public Enemas: The Disjunctions of the Excremental Jewish Pharmakon', in *Foreign Bodies and the Body Politic: Discourses of Social Pathology in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 79–106 (p. 80).



Figure 8. Horned owl with human face.
Westminster Abbey Bestiary, MS 22, fol. 40.
© The Dean and Chapter of Westminster Abbey.

resemblance to contemporary portraits of Jews', giving the owl a 'recognizably human face' with a beak 'skillfully turned into a hooked nose'.⁵⁷ The thirteenth-century Westminster Abbey Bestiary (MS 22) offers a pertinent example, where in addition to a human face and hooked nose the owl (*bubo*) is given horns — not just ears — easily identifiable with the horned hat the Jews were obliged to wear (Figure 8).

In the thirteenth-century Harley Bestiary (London, British Library, MS Harley 4751), an owl (*bubo*) is shown being mobbed by three smaller birds (Figure 9). Again, the owl is given a human face and

hooked nose, and is thus identified with the Jews — hated by Christians just as the owl is by other birds.

As Miyazaki has shown in her survey of English bestiaries, even in cases where the owl has not been so graphically anthropomorphized, the images often include scriptural references linking the bird to the Jews: for instance, the owl (*nycticorax*) in the thirteenth-century Oxford Bestiary (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 602), 'shown closing its eyes and pecking a corpse in front of a collapsing temple [...] likely alludes to the ruin of Babylon and to the Synagogue, and thus to the destruction of the Old Law'.⁵⁸

In the absence of any visual link, the bestiary text itself may make this connection. In some cases this may be explicit, such as in the so-called Second-Family Latin bestiaries like the Aberdeen Bestiary (Aberdeen University Library,

⁵⁷ Mariko Miyazaki, 'Misericord Owls and Medieval Anti-Semitism', in *The Mark of the Beast: The Medieval Bestiary in Art, Life, and Literature*, ed. by Debra Hassig (New York: Garland, 1999), pp. 23–43 (p. 28).

⁵⁸ Miyazaki, 'Misericord Owls and Medieval Anti-Semitism', p. 28.

MS 24),⁵⁹ where the owl (*noctua*) ‘symbolizes the Jews’ (*figuram gerit iudeorum*) who rejected Christ’s salvation and preferred darkness to light (fol. 51^r). Often the link is subtler, such as in the example Miyazaki offers of the owl (*ulula*) in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 764, where the text cites Isaiah 13, again referring to the destruction of Babylon.⁶⁰

These antisemitic visual and textual narratives were not confined to the bestiary page, but found their way into other



Figure 9. Owl mobbed by smaller birds. London, British Library, MS Harley 4751, fol. 47^r. © British Library Board, London.

genres and media. According to a twelfth-century poem attributed to Walter Map, Christ was put to death by owls (*Christus a noctuis ad necem trahitur*) and Christ was surrendered up for punishment by owls (*Christus a noctuis datur supplicio*).⁶¹ Moving from manuscript to architecture, Miyazaki has persuasively shown that medieval misericord and roof boss carvings of owls being mobbed in Norwich Cathedral (Figure 10) indicate the transmission and adaptation of bestiary owl

⁵⁹ The division of Latin bestiaries into families was proposed by M. R. James in *The Bestiary* (Oxford: Roxburghe Club, 1928) and refined by Florence McCulloch, *Medieval Latin and French Bestiaries* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1960). For more detail about the classification, see the introduction and commentary in Willene B. Clark, *A Medieval Book of Beasts* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2006).

⁶⁰ Miyazaki, ‘Misericord Owls and Medieval Anti-Semitism’, p. 28.

⁶¹ The poem, which has been titled *De Maria Virgine* by its latest editor, is preserved in London, British Library, MS Cotton Titus A 20, fols 169^v–175^v, and is reprinted in *The Latin Poems Commonly Attributed to Walter Mapes*, ed. by Thomas Wright (London: Camden Society, 1841), pp. 191–207 (lines 419, 423). The owl/crucifixion narrative may have been more widely circulated elsewhere in Europe: for example, the Antwerp *Crucifixion* by Antonello da Messina (c. 1475) depicts an owl alone in the foreground of the painting.

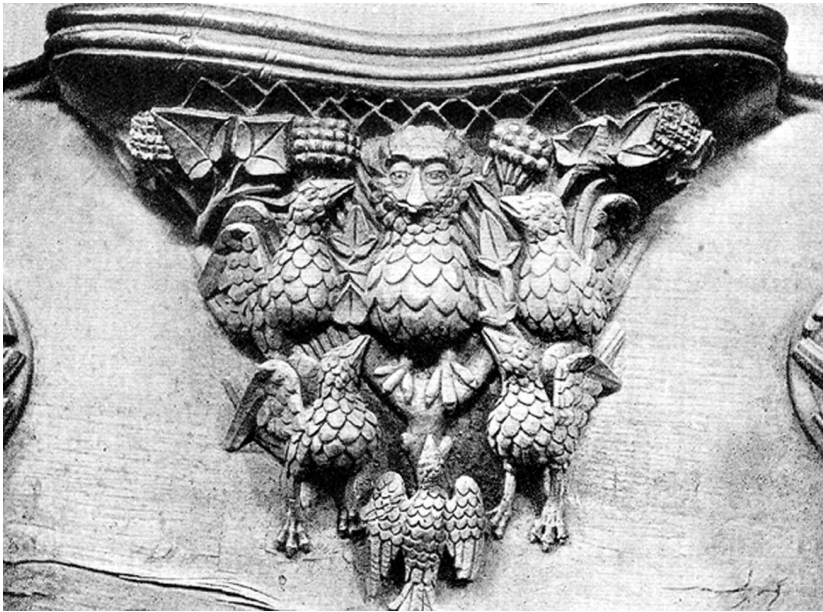


Figure 10. Owl mobbed by smaller birds. Carved misericord, Norwich Cathedral.
Photograph by George C. Druce, F.S.A.

imagery into other media, through ‘an acquaintance with bestiary stories by way of sermons and fables’, making them ‘especially relevant in public church settings’.⁶²

Like the carved owls in cathedrals across England that survived the iconoclasm of the Reformation,⁶³ these medieval antisemitic narratives survived long after the Jews had been expelled from England. As Stephen Greenblatt so eloquently put it, ‘the Jews left traces far more difficult to eradicate than people, and the English brooded on these traces — stories circulated, reiterated, and elaborated — continually and virtually obsessively’, and the emblematic owl is but one of many of these traces that ‘played a powerful role in the country’s imaginative economy’.⁶⁴ Drawing on this imaginative economy, devotees like William Austin could berate those ‘Owle-eyed Iewes [...] that loved *darknesse*, better then *Light*’,⁶⁵ in much the same way that readers of Aemilia Lanyer’s *Salve Deus Rex Iudaeorum* could appreciate

⁶² Miyazaki, ‘Misericord Owls and Medieval Anti-Semitism’, p. 24.

⁶³ Carvings of owls survive in Exeter, Gloucester, Lincoln, and Winchester cathedrals.

⁶⁴ Stephen Greenblatt, *Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare* (New York: Norton, 2004), p. 258.

⁶⁵ William Austin, *Devotionis Augustinianae Flamma* (London, 1635; STC 972), p. 197.

her rebuke of Caiaphas, failing to apprehend Christ's divinity for his 'Owly eies are blind, and cannot see'.⁶⁶

One final example of the Jew/owl motif as it appears in early modern England deserves closer inspection. Thomas Palmer's *Two Hundred Poosees* (c. 1565), the earliest English emblem book surviving in an autograph manuscript (London, British Library, MS Sloane 3794), contains the emblem of 'The blinde Iue':

The Oule dothe flie abrode to get
 suche meate as he dothe lacke,
 And sees it beste, when that the nighte
 eche thinge hathe died blacke.
 But when the Sonne with christall beames
 hathe whitened all againe,
 Then he perceaves his sighte to faile,
 and takes no farther payne.
 The Iue dothe flee the lighte of christe,
 and glories in the Lawe:
 What saide I then? he was an Oule?
 no, no, he is a dawe.⁶⁷

Palmer's emblem makes the common pun on 'Sonne' as both the sun and the Son, linking the owl's aversion to daylight with the Jewish rejection of Christ. For those readers who perhaps failed to grasp the initial pun, Palmer follows with less elusive wordplay, giving the sun/Son '*christall beames*' (emphasis mine) The blindness of Palmer's Jew, who 'glories in the Lawe', is wilful obstinacy rather than simple ignorance, drawing upon a long tradition of representing the Jewish inability to accept the supersession of the Old Law by the New.

Interestingly, in the final couplet, the Jew is reimagined as a 'dawe' or jackdaw, a bird known for its garrulousness and often used as an epithet for gossips, scolds, and railers.⁶⁸ This characterization of the jackdaw was expanded in medieval

⁶⁶ Aemilia Lanyer, *Salve Deus Rex Iudaeorum* (London, 1611; STC 15227), C4^r (line 712). On the question of Lanyer's purported Jewish ancestry, see Alessio Ruffatti, 'Italian Musicians at the Tudor Court: Were They Really Jews?', *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England*, 35 (2000), 1–14.

⁶⁷ Thomas Palmer, *Two Hundred Poosees* (BL, MS Sloane 3794), emblem 198, as transcribed in *The Emblems of Thomas Palmer: Two Hundred Poosees, Sloane MS 3794*, ed. by John Manning (New York: AMS Press, 1988). The last hundred emblems lack pictura, with Palmer simply providing descriptions of the intended image. In the case of emblem 198, the pictura Palmer had in mind was of 'the Oule fleinge by nighte'.

⁶⁸ See, for example, John Florio's definitions for the Italian *gracchia* and *taccola* in *A Worlde of Wordes* (London, 1598; STC 11098), p. 153, p. 410.

bestiaries, such as in the Aberdeen Bestiary (fol. 51^v), where the bird signifies the vain chatter of philosophers (*philosophorum vanam loquacitatem*) and the noxious verbosity of heretics (*hereticorum verbositatem noxiam*). Further, converts learn the words of religion (*verba religionis*) just as the jackdaw can be taught the words of men (fol. 52^r). Given the increased number of converted Jews (*conversos*) and secret Jews (*marranos*) in Europe (as well as England) following their expulsion from Spain and Portugal at the close of the fifteenth century, Palmer's emblem perhaps resonates with sixteenth-century anxieties about these resident aliens and their uncertain religious allegiances.⁶⁹

The Owl-light of Rome

Polemics on all sides during the various European Reformations of the sixteenth century took great pains to denigrate the beliefs and personalities of the opposition, with the advent of moveable type allowing the war for the souls of Christendom to extend beyond the limited hearing range of the pulpit. Libels issued from both camps were quick to emphasize the monstrosity, carnality, and diabolism of the other, and in doing so often relied on the Jews, a tried-and-true symbol embodying all of these abject qualities. For the Reformers, the pope was not simply a monster — as in the satirical woodcut depiction of the *Bapstesel*,⁷⁰ or 'Pope Ass' — but the head of the 'Synagogue of Satan', a phrase originally found in the Book of Revelation that became a popular epithet in medieval polemics against the Jews.⁷¹ The attacks of Luther and other Reformers therefore continued 'a long tradition of

⁶⁹ The Jew as daw motif also occurs in Andrew Boorde's popular treatise, *The Fyrst Boke of the Introduction of Knowledge* (London, 1555; STC 3383), where the figure of the Jew expresses the fear that 'at length I shall proue a daw' (N2^v).

⁷⁰ As Alain Boureau neatly summarizes, 'In 1496 a monstrous cadaver was fished out of the Tiber: a she-ass with a female human torso, the arms and legs of a variety of animals, and a dragon-like tail. It was immediately baptized "the Papal Ass" (*Die Bapstesel zu Rom*). The engraver Wenzel von Olmutz depicted the prodigy and published his image, with an antipapal exegesis, in Bohemia in the late fifteenth century. From there the image passed into Germany [...] and in 1523 Luther and Melancthon published illustrations and commentary on the Papal Ass and another prodigy, the Monk Calf [...] The images were a wild success: the paired figures together went through nine editions, with five editions of the Papal Ass alone and a number of translations into French, English, and Dutch': *The Myth of Pope Joan*, trans. by Lydia G. Cochrane (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), p. 233.

⁷¹ Revelation 2. 9, 3. 9; see Strickland, *Saracens, Demons, and Jews*, p. 128.

identifying Babylon with the Roman Catholic Church',⁷² one that had earlier 'offered medieval heretics a needed critique of the established faith'.⁷³ The sheer number of treatises against the ceremonies of the 'Romish Synagogue' and the rituals of the 'Synagogue of Satan' printed in early modern England is evidence of the lasting popularity and utility of the label.

Where the taint of Jewishness was alleged, the symbolic association of the owl was sure to follow: in the highly charged sectarian debates of the sixteenth century, the owl — the popular symbol of Jewish blindness, filth, and folly — became associated with Catholics.⁷⁴ In England, Reformers like John Bale admonished papists for being 'lyke [...] the owle, whyche seeth all in the darke, and nothyng in the clere lyght'.⁷⁵ In *De Byen Corf der H. Roomsche Kercke* (Amsterdam, 1569), translated into English in 1579, the Flemish exile Philips van Marnix would draw upon the association of the owl with blindness and sloth in his satire on the 'bee hive of the Romish Church', in which the priests

Make their eyes as dim as an Owle: they watche by night, to sleepe in the day: they forsake their owne riches and substance, to liue on the sweate of other mens browes: they labour neuer a whit, to the ende they may enter into more deepe contemplations.⁷⁶

Like the charge of judaizing, the 'owle-eyed' blindness of Catholics became a stock-standard slur in English Protestant polemic well into the seventeenth century.⁷⁷ An

⁷² Judith L. Kovacs and Christopher Rowland, *Revelation: The Apocalypse of Jesus Christ*, Blackwell Bible Commentaries (Malden: Blackwell, 2004), p. 55.

⁷³ Nathan Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 29.

⁷⁴ The title-page woodcut of the second part of Martin Luther's controversial pamphlet *Wider die Himmlischen Propheten, von den Bildern und Sakrament* (Erfurt, 1525) features an owl and cites II Timothy 3, 'their folly shall be evident to all men' (Calmann, 'The Picture of Nobody', p. 67, n. 47). Later, Luther would be himself slighted as an owl by way of a facetious comment made by the Catholic controversialist John Sergeant in his *Error Non-Plust* (London, 1673; Wing S2565), 'All slept, and were wrap't up (God wot) in the dark night of Ignorance, till owl-ey'd Luther even at that mid-night of Infidelity most blessedly esp'd the Light of the Gospel dawning' (2F4^v).

⁷⁵ John Bale, *The Apology of Iohan Bale Agaynst a Ranke Pypyst* (London, 1550; STC 1275), lvi^f.

⁷⁶ Philips van Marnix, *The Bee Hiue of the Romishe Church*, trans. by George Gilpin (London, 1579; STC 17445), 2N3^v.

⁷⁷ Representative examples include Andrew Willet, *A Retection, or Discouerie of a False Detection* (London, 1603; STC 25694), A3^v; George Closse, *The Parricide Papist, or Cut-throate Catholic* (London, 1606; STC 5441), B4^f; Henry Burton, *A Plea to an Appeale* (London, 1626; STC 4153), L4^v; Thomas Dering, *The Foure Cardinall-Vertues of a Carmelite-Fryar* (London, 1641; Wing D1109), B4^v.

oft-cited episode from ecclesiastical history — a topic of renewed interest at the time — would reveal an additional link between the papacy and the owl. The story, perhaps more fiction than fact, takes place at a council called by the fifteenth-century antipope John XXIII in Rome, where, after ‘a Masse of the holy Ghost being sayd’ and those present having taken their seats,

A houghly and dredefull Owle [...] flew to and fro, with her euill fauoured voyce, & standyng vpo[n] the middle beame of the church, cast her staryng eyes vpon the pope sitting, the whole company began to maruell [...] For behold sayd they, (whispyrnyng one in anothers eare) the spirite appeareth in the shape of an Owle. And as they stode beholding one an other, & aduising the Pope, skarsly could keepe their countenance fro[m] laughter, Iohn him self, vpon whom the Owle stedfastly looked, blushyng at the matter, began to sweat and to freat [...] beyng so confused dissoluyng the Councell, rose vp and departed. After that there folowed an other session. In the which the Owle again, after the maner aforesayd [...] was present lookyng stedfastly vpon the Byshop, whom hee beholdyng to be come agayne, was more ashamed then he was before (and iustly) saying hee could no longer abyde the sight of her, & commaunded that she should be driuen away with battes and shottinges: but she beyng afraid neither with their noyse, neither of any thyng els, would not away, vntill that with the strokes of the stickes, which were throwne at her, she fell downe dead before the[m] all.⁷⁸

While Foxe doubted the authenticity of the story — ‘scarsly credityng [it] for the rarenes of the matter’ — other commentators were not so concerned. For them, the event offered a poignant case of Catholic superstition — that the owl could be the Holy Spirit — and, depending on whether the owl actually *was* the Holy Spirit or not, blasphemy or folly. For example, as part of his discussion of ‘the wicked lives, and wofull deaths of the Popes, and Popelings’, Samuel Clarke concludes the story by citing II Thessalonians 2. 8: ‘then shall that wicked one be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming’.⁷⁹ Viewed as an indication of divine condemnation

⁷⁸ Foxe, *Actes and Monuments*, 2P5^{f-v}. The ultimate source of the tale is Nicolas de Clamanges, *Disputatio super materia Concilii Generalis*, printed in *Fasciculus rerum expetendarum et fugiendarum* (Cologne, 1535), p. 201. The story is repeated, often with added anti-Catholic vitriol, in various sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English treatises, including Christopher Carlile, *A Discourse [...] That Peter was Neuer at Rome* (London, 1572; STC 4655), L3^v; John Bale, *A Pageant of Popes*, trans. by John Studley (London, 1574; STC 1304), pp. 156–57; John Lupton, *The Christian Against the Iesuite* (London, 1582; STC 14946), 49^{f-v} and 93^r; George Wither, *A View of the Marginal Notes of the Popish Testament* (London, 1588; STC 25889), B3^r; Andrew Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* (London, 1592; STC 25696), pp. 90–91; and Alexander Cooke, *Pope Ioane* (London, 1625; STC 5660), G3^v.

⁷⁹ Samuel Clarke, *A Mirrour or Looking-Glasse both for Saints and Sinners* (London, 1646; Wing C4548), F7^r.

during the Western Schism, the story of the owl and the Council at Rome was absorbed into an increasing arsenal of anti-Catholic narratives during the Reformations of the sixteenth century.

Under Elizabeth, as Christopher Haigh has famously noted, England became 'a Protestant nation, but not a nation of Protestants'.⁸⁰ Catholicism was not simply a spectre from the past, but a real presence:

For even after more than three decades of official Protestantism, committed Catholics were still to be found in England. Catholicism survived and even thrived in several surreptitious guises. Wealthy recusants, long-standing noble families whose attachment to the old religion could easily outlive Tudor monarchs, were able to keep priests as part of their households, and to pay the stiff fines for non-attendance at church. 'Church papists' practised their religion privately while outwardly conforming. And after the pope's excommunication of Elizabeth in 1570, Jesuit priests, most of them Continentally educated sons of English Catholic families, attempted to continue Mary I's work of Counter-Reformation, transforming it into a missionary movement.⁸¹

Whether they outwardly conformed as 'church papists' or refused to attend the Protestant service as recusants, Catholics in early modern England were seen as remaining in the darkness of the 'owle-light of Rome'.⁸² Anthony Nixon's *Romes Downefall*, one of three poems written to celebrate the accession of James I in 1603, succinctly captures the popular anti-Catholic sentiment of the times:

Vanish away ye birds of vgly night,
Which with the Owle ca[n]not endure the light;
The light hath all your knauerie bewrai'd,
And to the view of all the world it laid.
Your neasts are found, your filthinesse descride,
Then pack away, no longer here abide.⁸³

Here, as before with the Jews in medieval narratives, Catholics are figured as blind, foolish and deceitful ('knauerie'), filthy, and unwelcomed owls and 'birds of vgly night'. Similarly, in Phineas Fletcher's allegorical poem, *The Purple Island*, Catholicism is represented by the figure of 'Owl-cy'd Superstition', who is

⁸⁰ Christopher Haigh, *The English Reformations: Religion, Politics, and Society under the Tudors* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 280.

⁸¹ Lori Anne Ferrell, 'Religious Persuasions, c. 1580–c. 1620', in *Companion to Renaissance Drama*, ed. by Arthur F. Kinney (Malden: Blackwell, 2002), pp. 40–49 (p. 44).

⁸² Willet, *A Retection, or Discouerie of a False Detection*, A3^v.

⁸³ Anthony Nixon, *Elizaes Memoriall, King Iames his Arriuall, and Romes Downefall* (London, 1603; STC 18586), D2^r.

Deform'd, distorted, blinde in shining light;
 Yet styles her self holy Devotion,
 And so is call'd, and seems in shadie night:
 Fearfull, as is the hare, or hunted hinde;
 Her face and breast she oft with crosses sign'd:
 No custome would she break, or change her setled minde.⁸⁴

Again, the owl is linked with Catholic blindness, folly, superstition, and abjectness ('deform'd, distorted'). Moreover, Fletcher's reference to the 'hunted hinde' surely would have brought to mind a particular group of Catholics, namely the Jesuit priests whom the Tudor and Stuart authorities were increasingly keen to apprehend and prosecute as conspirators and traitors to the Crown. It is unsurprising then that the Jesuits would be the next group to be maligned as owls in the early modern English imagination. In 1580, Edmund Campion and Robert Persons led the first Jesuit mission to England, and after several months in the country, Persons published his defence of recusancy, *A Brief Discours Containing Certayne Reasons Why Catholiques Refuse to Goe to Church* (London, 1580; STC 19394). Among other reasons, Persons argued that Catholics refused to attend the Protestant Churches out of religious conviction, not out of contempt for the Crown. Although Persons signed the introductory epistle dedicated to Elizabeth as 'I. Howlet' (2+8^v), the authorities were quick to ascertain the identity of its author.

In the meantime, his choice of pseudonym would prove to be unfortunate. An owlet/howlet is an infant or small owl, and as Malcolm South notes, this 'was immediately seized upon by the controversialists who answered Persons'.⁸⁵ The title of William Fulke's response attacked Persons's 'popish discourse' as 'presumptuously dedicated to the Queenes most excellent Maiestie' as by 'Iohn Howlet, or some other birde of the night'.⁸⁶ Perceval Wilburn's 'briefe confutation' was aimed at Howlet's 'vntimely schreeching in her Maiesties eares', in which Howlet is described as a 'foule and vnluckie bird' which 'schritchith an[d] maketh an yll fauoured noyse'.⁸⁷ As a final example, John Fielde's response called Howlet 'an obscure owle' that 'fluttered foorth in the broade day and skriched oute in her

⁸⁴ Phineas Fletcher, *The Purple Island, or, the Isle of Man* (Cambridge, 1633; STC 11082), M4^r.

⁸⁵ Malcolm H. South, 'The "Vncleane Birds, in Seuentie-Seuen": *The Alchemist*', *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900*, 13 (1973), 331–43 (p. 332).

⁸⁶ William Fulke, *A Briefe Confutation, of a Popish Discourse* (London, 1581; STC 11421).

⁸⁷ Perceval Wilburn, *A Checke or Reproofe of M. Howlets Vntimely Schreeching in Her Maiesties Eares* (London, 1581; STC 25586), title-page, A2^v (where Elizabeth I is figured as the nightingale), A2^r.

Maiesties eares', along with 'all the rest of that darke brood' of 'owles and vnclane birds' like him that sought 'the discredite of the trueth, and the disquiet of this Church of England'.⁸⁸ Persons never published under the name Howlet again.

Jesuit involvement in Catholic plots, both real and imagined, further cemented identification with the owl. In *The Whore of Babylon*, Thomas Dekker's thinly veiled allegorical staging of the various failed Catholic attempts on Elizabeth's life, the counsellor Parthenophil (William Cecil) informs the Fairy Queen Titania (Elizabeth) of the capture of Campeius (Edmund Campion), describing him as an 'Owle, that did not love [her] sacred light', who 'Stole or'e the Seas by darknes, and was held | In Babilon [Rome] a bird of noble flight'.⁸⁹ The failed Gunpowder Plot of 1605, which implicated the Jesuit Henry Garnett, gave popular anti-Catholic sentiment renewed vigour. Published only a few months following the plot, Dekker's *The Double PP* (that is, PoPe) focuses much vitriol on the Jesuits, and includes the following character sketch:

A *Papist Vmbreant* (like a Skreech-owle) sits
All day vnseen: but when the sorcerous night
Spreads her deepe Spells, hee coniures vp his wits,
Giuing his soule to Treason: hee's a Sprite
That deales in *Fire-workes*: *Vaults* are his delight,
Where for his close Traynes, hell does him prefer
To be *Arch-Enginist* to *Lucifer*.⁹⁰

Although clearly directed at Guy Fawkes, Dekker's sketch of the 'Papist Vmbreant' resonates with other descriptions of the Jesuits. Likened to 'a Skreech-owle', the 'Papist Vmbreant' recalls Robert Persons and his fellow 'birds of night'. Earlier in the pamphlet is 'the Pictvre of a Iesuite', in which Dekker plays upon the Jesuit use of disguise, equivocation, and secrecy to become anyone or anything: 'Hee's *Brown*, hee's *Gray*, hee's *Black*, hee's *white*, | He's Any thing [...] *A Jesuit*' (B1^v). References to vaults and engines in the image of the 'Papist Vmbreant' similarly echo Dekker's earlier 'Pictvre' of a Jesuit as having 'two *Engines*' for legs, which are part of his arsenal of mimicry: 'like the vaulting horses legs', they are made longer or shorter through use of 'Iron pegs' (A3^v). Thus able to transform themselves and moving

⁸⁸ John Fielde, *A Caueat for Parsons Howlet* (London, 1581; STC 10844), title-page, A4^r, F7^v.

⁸⁹ Thomas Dekker, *The Whore of Babylon* (London, 1607; STC 6532), H1^r. For a recent discussion of the play and its use of nostalgia to covertly critique the Jacobean court, see Susan E. Krantz, 'Thomas Dekker's Political Commentary in *The Whore of Babylon*', *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900*, 35 (1995), 271–91.

⁹⁰ Thomas Dekker, *The Double PP* (London, 1606; STC 6498), D2^r.

under cover of darkness, Jesuit missionaries were imagined to roam the English countryside in secret ‘night walks like owles’.⁹¹

As Malcolm South has persuasively shown, by the time Ben Jonson penned *The Alchemist*, the association between owls and other ‘vnclane birds’ and ‘Catholics and missionary priests’ had been established in England ‘for a number of years’.⁹² In the play, the Puritan Ananias rebukes Surly, disguised as a Spaniard, saying

Thou art not of the light. That Ruffe of pride,
About thy neck, betrayes thee: ‘and is the same
With that, which the vnclane Birds, In *seuenty-seuen*,
Were seene to pranke it with, on diuers coasts.’⁹³

Jonson’s audience certainly would have appreciated the more sinister implications of Ananias’s rebuke: that Surly’s ruff ‘betrayes’ him as a Catholic, as it is the ‘same’ as those worn by the ‘vnclane Birds, in *seuenty-seuen*’, that is, the seminary priests who wore ruffs of the Spanish style as part of their disguise as courtiers. These ‘vnclane Birds’ are no doubt owls, whose round faces framed with feathers resemble ruffs: Mildmay Fane would later describe the ‘Owl’ in a poem as ‘Rufft like a Judge’.⁹⁴ As South suggests, Jonson’s ‘*seuenty-seuen*’ might refer to 1577 as the year in which Cuthbert Mayne became the first of these fugitive priests to be executed in England.⁹⁵

Whether or not this is the case,⁹⁶ or Jonson had another event of 1577 in mind, it is clear that by the time of the first performance of *The Alchemist* the link between owls and Catholics in general, and Jesuits and seminary priests in particular, was common enough to be readily identifiable. Both Jonson and Dekker could reasonably expect their audiences to recognize their use of the language of sectarian symbolism, manifest in print and pulpit, which held that Catholics followed the

⁹¹ George Whetstone, *The Censure of a Loyall Subiect* (London, 1587; STC 25334), D2^r.

⁹² South, “The “Vnclane Birds, in Seuenty-Seuen”, p. 335.

⁹³ Ben Jonson, *The Alchemist* (London, 1612; STC 14755), K4^v.

⁹⁴ Mildmay Fane, ‘My Happy Life, To A Friend’, *Otia sacra optima fides* (London, 1648; Wing W1476), p. 137.

⁹⁵ South, “The “Vnclane Birds, in Seuenty-Seuen”, p. 338.

⁹⁶ Sightings of monstrous birds with ruffs off the Lincolnshire coast in 1586 were reported in a pamphlet (STC 6074a.7), prompting M. A. Shaaber to suggest an allusion by Jonson: “The “Vnclane Birds” in *The Alchemist*”, *MLN*, 65 (1950), 106–09. Shaaber’s unsatisfactory explanation was adopted by Gordon Campbell, who glosses the passage in his edition of the play for the Oxford English Drama series, adding ‘Ananias is probably alluding to a later visitation’ of the monstrous birds: *The Alchemist and Other Plays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 501.

‘whore of Babylon’, a pope who ‘flieth the light of the Scriptures, and loveth the darke night of ignorance’, whose ‘Priests and Iesuites sculke and lurke [...] in dens and thickets of ignorance’ and as ‘Owles and Bats flutter abroad [...] in the twilight’ to incite rebellion and bring about the ruin of Protestant England.⁹⁷

Owls and Purblind Puritans

The Roman Catholic Church was not alone in being tarnished with the stigma of Jewishness, as the various Protestant groups that emerged during the sixteenth century were quick to paint their rivals, Papists and Reformers alike, with the same brush: whether Catholic or Protestant, the charge of judaizing became ‘an all-too-convenient, pejorative epithet’ that could be (and was) levelled at anyone, regardless of creed.⁹⁸ Jerome Friedman illustrates the situation succinctly as follows:

The Lutheran author Hunnius described John Calvin as a judaizer [in his *Calvinus Iudaizans* (Wittenberg, 1595)] much as Calvin believed Lutheran liturgy was highly judaistic. On the other hand, Roman Catholic spokesmen thought Lutheran preoccupation with scriptural literalism was judaistic while both Reformed and Lutheran thinkers assumed Roman Catholic interest in ceremony and ritual reflected judaizing tendencies.⁹⁹

In much the same way that English Protestants stigmatized Catholic pomp and ceremony as a regression to Judaism, the charge of judaizing also formed part of the ‘virulent polemic of denunciation of those who sought any further reform of the English Church’.¹⁰⁰ William Gouge’s irritation at the branding of his fellow

⁹⁷ Thomas Taylor, *Two Sermons* (London, 1624; STC 23853), B4^v. In another sermon, published posthumously as *Evangelicall Sacrifices in XIX Sermons* (London, 1640; STC 22491), Richard Sibbes urged parents and teachers to have ‘more care of catechising’ and ‘of grounding young ones in the ground of Religion’, since ‘the neglect of this [...] hath made them fit for Iesuits and Priests to work on’. As ‘Popery is a Kingdome of darkness’, education serves to ‘set up lights that may shine; for these Owles fly in the darke, they cannot endure the light’ (pp. 122–23).

⁹⁸ Allison P. Coudert, *The Impact of the Kabbalah in the Seventeenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), p. 104.

⁹⁹ Jerome Friedman, *The Most Ancient Testimony: Sixteenth-Century Christian-Hebraica in the Age of Renaissance Nostalgia* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1983), p. 182. On the ways in which the charge of judaizing was used by various sides in the Reformation debates, see Róbert Dán, ‘Judaizare: The Career of a Term’, in *Antitrinitarianism in the Second Half of the 16th Century*, ed. by Róbert Dán and Antal Pirnát (Leiden: Brill, 1982), pp. 25–34.

¹⁰⁰ Lori Anne Ferrell, *Government by Polemic: James I, the King’s Preachers, and the Rhetorics of Conformity, 1603–1625* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 9.

reformers 'with ignominious titles, as *Precisians, Puritanes, Sabbatarians*, and *Jewes*'¹⁰¹ is representative of the way in which these various groups were conflated and maligned by virtue of the perceived Jewish tendencies they shared: privileging Old Testament values and espousing the literal interpretation of scripture. Robert Burton, after recounting the story of the Jew who fell into a privy at Tewkesbury, concludes his discussion of religious melancholy by stating that 'we have myriads of examples in this kind'.¹⁰² A sermon by John Howson offers one of the contemporary examples Burton alludes to: of those that 'doe Iudaize' and 'will see their neighbour perish before they will relieue him on the Sabbath day', Howson tells of an Oxfordshire man 'who lately when his fathers ribbes were broken would not ride for a bone-setter on the Sabbath day'.¹⁰³

Criticism of Puritans was not confined to print or pulpit. The English stage 'had good reasons for hating the Puritan', and 'he did lend himself in an obvious manner to comic caricature with material as rich and as rewarding as the old vice'.¹⁰⁴ Indeed, the influence of the theatre's use of the stock figure has led Patrick Collinson to suggest that the stage was instrumental in the cultural construction of Puritan identity itself.¹⁰⁵ In addition to their hypocrisy, religious fervour, and snobbery, stage Puritans were mocked for their subscription to Jewish beliefs and practices, such as abstaining from pork or observing the Jewish Sabbath. Examples include 'Rabbi' Zeal-of-the-Land Busy in Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*, or the Puritan figure

¹⁰¹ William Gouge, *The Sabbaths Sanctification* (London, 1641; Wing G1395), E3^v. On the vilification of Puritans as Jews in early modern England, see Nicholas McDowell, 'The Stigmatizing of Puritans as Jews in Jacobean England: Ben Jonson, Francis Bacon and the *Book of Sports* Controversy', *Renaissance Studies*, 19 (2005), 348–63.

¹⁰² Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy*, 3Z2^v

¹⁰³ John Howson, *A Sermon Preached at St. Maries in Oxford* (London, 1602; STC 13884), C1^r.

¹⁰⁴ William P. Holden, *Anti-Puritan Satire, 1572–1642* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), p. 101.

¹⁰⁵ Patrick Collinson, 'Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*: The Theatre Constructs Puritanism', in *The Theatrical City: Culture, Theatre and Politics in London, 1576–1649*, ed. by David L. Smith, Richard Strier, and David Bevington (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 157–69. See also Patrick Collinson's essay, 'Ecclesiastical Vitriol: Religious Satire in the 1590s and the Invention of Puritanism', in *The Reign of Elizabeth I: Court and Culture in the Last Decade*, ed. by John Guy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 150–70. For challenges to the dominant stereotypes of religious non-conformity, see Kristen Poole, *Radical Religion from Shakespeare to Milton: Figures of Nonconformity in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

appearing as part of the 'anticke round of dancers' in Robert Davenport's *A New Tricke to Cheat the Divell*, who announces:

I am a Puritan [...] one that will eate no Porke,
Doth use to shut his shop on Saterdayes,
And open them on Sundayes: a Familist;
And one of the Arch limbes of Belzebub,
A Iewish Christian, and a Christian Jew.¹⁰⁶

Here, as elsewhere, the stage Puritan is not simply a caricature of a Jew, but a complex conflation of various identities: he is at once a Sabbatarian (one who adheres to the Saturday Sabbath of the Old Testament), a Familist (a member of the heretical Family of Love), a Christian, and a Jew — and, as 'one of the Arch limbes of Belzebub', he could be aligned with the Catholic Church or any number of unorthodox religious groups. In constructing the Puritan as an amalgam of deviant identities, anti-Puritan rhetoric was able to kill a handful of birds with one stone: the fictional Puritan delineated the boundaries of non-conformity, and anti-Puritan satire consolidated English Protestant orthodoxy.

The stigmatizing of Puritans as Jews, on stage and page, has led some critics to argue that Jewish stage characters, Shylock in particular, are better appreciated as thinly veiled representations of Puritans. 'Shylock may be a Jew,' Robin Headlam Wells has recently argued, 'but he has all the characteristics of the stereotypical Elizabethan puritan: he runs a "sober" house; he is self-righteous and thrifty; and he hates music, masquing and revelry.'¹⁰⁷ In an earlier review of these sorts of claims, Walter Cohen concluded that 'the identification is unconvincing', not least 'because it is just as easy to transform [Shylock] into a Catholic' and, 'more generally, because he is too complex and contradictory to fit neatly the stereotype of Puritan thrift'.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ Robert Davenport, *A New Tricke to Cheat the Divell* (London, 1639; STC 6315), F4^v.

¹⁰⁷ Robin Headlam Wells, *Shakespeare's Humanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 18. Others who have argued for a Puritan Shylock include Leeds Barroll, *Artificial Persons* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1974), p. 150; Hyam Maccoby, 'Shakespeare and Shylock', in *Antisemitism and Modernity: Innovation and Continuity* (New York: Routledge, 2006), pp. 97–107; Peter Milward, *Shakespeare's Religious Background* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973), pp. 158–61; Paul N. Siegel, 'Shylock and the Puritan Usurers', in *Studies in Shakespeare*, ed. by A. D. Matthews and Clark M. Emery (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1953), pp. 129–38; and Paul N. Siegel, 'Shylock, the Elizabethan Puritan, and Our Own World', in *Shakespeare in his Time and Ours* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968), pp. 237–54.

¹⁰⁸ Walter Cohen, 'The Merchant of Venice and the Possibilities of Historical Criticism', *ELH*, 49 (1982), 765–89. On Shylock as a Catholic, see Lawrence Danson, *The Harmonies of 'The Merchant of Venice'* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978).

Already stigmatized as Jews, the symbolic identification of the Puritans with the owl was sure to follow. In print, the anonymous author of a tract in the Martin Marprelate controversy promised to follow up with another pamphlet, entitled 'The Owles Almanack', in which he will 'sette down all the vpstart Religions in this Land', including the 'Anabaptists; the Family of Loue', and 'the diuersities of Puritans and *Martinists*, with a number more which you shall heare of when that Booke is Printed'.¹⁰⁹ Not to be confused with the aforementioned Jacobean burlesque of the same title, this owlish almanac is presumably lost, was published under a different title, or the pseudonymous Pasquill simply failed to keep his promise and it never went to print.

The link between Puritans and owls was also made on the stage. In *Twelfth Night*, Sir Toby and his late-night revellers sing a catch knowing that it will 'rowze the night-Owle' (7558, II. 3. 57), that is, Malvolio. This description is fitting, since Malvolio is both 'a kinde of Puritane' (839, II. 3. 135) and a 'Weauer' (759, II. 3. 58). In early modern English usage, 'weaver' and 'Puritan' became synonymous, since the profession was in large part made up of Calvinist refugees from Flanders who brought the cloth-making industry with them. For example, a man in Puritan dress is described as a '*Geneva Weaver*' in Jasper Mayne's comedy *The Citye Match*,¹¹⁰ and George Chapman's *Monsieur D'Olive* includes a sketch of a Puritan 'weauer' who has become 'purblind' from reading the small print of the Geneva Bible.¹¹¹

Malvolio aside, another instance of a Puritan slighted as a weaver and an owl is found in Ben Jonson's *Masque of Owles*. Presented to Prince Charles at Kenilworth on 19 August 1624, the performance features the Ghost of Captain Cox mounted on his hobbyhorse as he introduces six 'Owles', the third of which is

A pure native Bird
This, and though his hue
Be not *Coventrie*-blue,
Yet he is undone
By the thred he has spunne,
For since the wise towne

¹⁰⁹ *The Return of the Renowned Cavaliero Pasquill of England* (London, 1589; STC 19457), A3^v. Although often ascribed to Thomas Nashe, the authorship of the pamphlet (as is characteristic of tracts in the Marprelate controversy) remains uncertain. For an interesting discussion of anonymity and the authorship of the Marprelate tracts, see Marcy L. North, *The Anonymous Renaissance: Cultures of Discretion in Tudor-Stuart England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), chap. 5.

¹¹⁰ Jasper Mayne, *The Citye Match* (Oxford, 1639; STC 17750), P1^r.

¹¹¹ George Chapman, *Monsieur D'Olive* (London, 1606; STC 4983), D3^r.

Has let the sports downe
 Of May-games, and Morris,
 For which he right sorry is.¹¹²

This 'Owle third' is a Puritan weaver from Coventry — presumably 'his hue' is a more godly black than the blue thread he sells — whose zeal in tearing down maypoles and stamping out traditional holiday festivities has backfired and left him bankrupt. With no more 'dancings, and Wakes' at which to wear the 'Napkins, and poses' (p. 127) and other decorative attire for which his thread was once bought, the Puritan's religious fervour has brought about his financial demise. Having 'neither wit, nor lands' (p. 128) he has literally nothing else to do with his thread but hang himself.

Captain Cox's promise that the masque intended 'No ill meaning to the Catholique faith' (p. 126) perhaps should have also included a disclaimer for the local Puritans, since internal evidence suggests the part of the third owl was 'censured for its complaint against the Coventry City Fathers' and 'denied an audience' until it was printed.¹¹³ The printing of an alternate version of the third owl at the end of the Folio text, 'the third varied' (p. 128), suggests that the original was probably 'suppressed for the performance', with Jonson 'characteristically restoring the original text in the manuscript left behind him for the printer'.¹¹⁴

The Parliament of Owls

As to be expected, the branding of radical sects — already conveniently lumped together as 'Puritans' — as owls reached its zenith during the period of religious and political unrest that ushered in the Civil War and Interregnum. In *The Schismatick Stigmatized*, Richard Carter dissects these various groups that sought

¹¹² Jonson's *Masque of Owles* was first printed in the Second Folio (London, 1640; STC 14754), pp. 125–28, where it is erroneously dated 1626.

¹¹³ Lambert, 'Expounding the Owl', p. 29. Lambert's article is the most comprehensive critical treatment of the *Masque of Owles* to date, and it offers a provocative reading of the performance as endorsing Jacobean policy at the same time as it 'subtly exposes an uncomfortable truth' (p. 29) about the policy in question. The third owl is mostly excluded from the discussion on the grounds that it was suppressed.

¹¹⁴ Ben Jonson, *Masque of Owles*, ed. by C. H. Herford, Percy Simpson, and Evelyn Simpson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925–52), x, 700. Stephen Orgel reaches the same conclusion in his edition of the *Complete Masques*, for the Yale Ben Jonson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), p. 431.

further reform of the Church — the ‘rabble of Brain-sicks’ and ‘Eves-dropping-newes-carriers, Murmurers, Complainers, Railers, Reproachers, Revilers, Repining Reformers, Fault-finders, Quarrell-pickers, and Corner-creeper’ — which he saw as ‘enemies to Old *Englands* Peace’.¹¹⁵ Gingerly noting their faults as part of his sectarian taxonomy, Carter describes those ‘schismaticks’ seeking ‘parity and equality of Ecclesiasticall persions’ as ‘Owles, Crowes, and *Mag-pyes*’ that ‘would have our Church like *Polyphemus*, without eyes, and without order’ (A3^v).

Other satires were more precisely linked to immediate historical events. As part of a ‘parliamentary visitation that had been authorized by the Long Parliament in 1647 to subjugate a university which, from 1642 to 1646, had loyally served Charles I as the capital of royalist England’, the Earl of Pembroke (Philip Herbert) was ordered by Parliament to take up his post as University Chancellor, arriving at Oxford in April 1648 to preside in convocation and to personally oversee the institution of reforms.¹¹⁶ As R. A. Beddard has noted, this newly imposed governance of the university consisted mostly of ‘academics who had not only politically sided with the victorious rebel cause’ but those that ‘personally profited from the ejection of the defeated royalist dons, to whose posts they had been preferred wholesale’.¹¹⁷ In addition to bemoaning the loss of their stronghold and the purging of many of their number from academic positions, royalists responded by publishing a number of satires mocking Pembroke as too vulgar and ignorant for the post, and accusing his cohorts of hypocrisy, incompetence, and greed. One of these satires, *An Owle at Athens* (London, 1648; Wing W3098), lampooned the entrance of Pembroke into Oxford as ‘the wise Lord, and’s wiser Horse’ (A2^v) before proceeding to mock other parliamentary visitors and intruding academics. Proverbially it was folly to bring owls to Athens, since they were already there — either literally (many were said to roost in the Parthenon) or figuratively (in much the same way that *angels* could refer to coinage that bore St Michael on its face, *owls* could refer to Athenian coins, since they bore the city’s icon on their reverse). The pamphlet’s title plays upon this double sense of folly, combining the owl’s traditional association with foolishness and echoing the proverbial sense of pointlessness in sending an owl (Pembroke) and his Puritan ‘Tribe of *Hebrews*’ (A3^r) to Oxford, parliament’s reclaimed Athens.

¹¹⁵ Richard Carter, *The Schismatick Stigmatized* (London, 1641; Wing C664), title-page.

¹¹⁶ R. A. Beddard, ‘The Origin of Charles II’s Visitation of the University of Oxford in 1660’, *Parliamentary History*, 24 (2005), 261–94 (p. 261).

¹¹⁷ Beddard, ‘Origin of Charles II’s Visitation’, p. 261.

Bringing owls to Athens was not the only owl proverb to be appropriated for partisan politics: the Dutch proverb, 'What use are candle and glasses, if the owl does not want to see', was 'frequently given expression in the pictorial arts',¹¹⁸ and English authors adapted it to satirize the various radical sects that sprung up during this period.

In his *Collection of Emblemes*, George Wither employs the motif in illustration

XLV of Book 4 (Figure 11), with the motto *caecus nil luce juvatur* ('Hee that is blind, will nothing see, | What light soe're about him bee'), singling out 'Heretickes' who 'cannot see the Rayes of Truth divine, | Though, brighter than the Day-light, shee doeth shine'.¹¹⁹

The motif appears in another broadside belonging to the period, *Fanatick Madg* (Figure 12), where an owl is perched on a book labelled 'The Association',

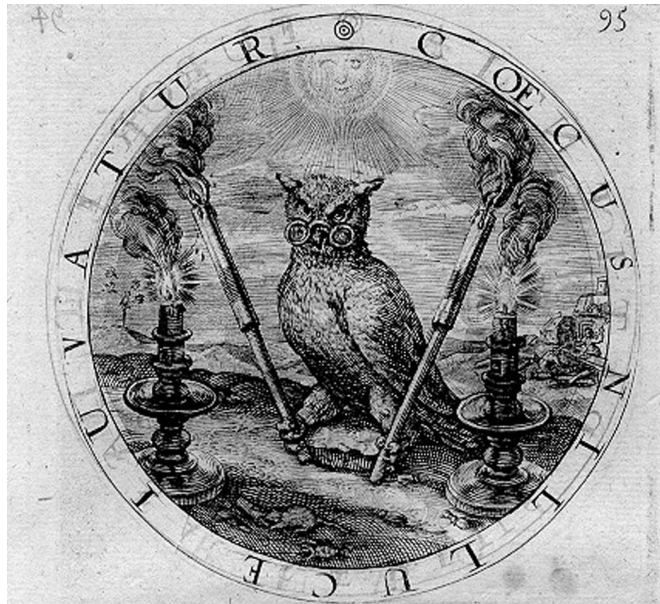


Figure 11. George Wither, *A Collection of Emblemes* (London, 1635), Book 4, Illustr. XLV. Courtesy of Rare Books and Manuscripts, Special Collections Library, The Pennsylvania State University Libraries.

¹¹⁸ Jane Russell Corbett, 'Convention and Change in Seventeenth-Century Depictions of Alchemists', in *Art and Alchemy*, ed. by Jacob Wamberg (Copenhagen: University of Copenhagen Press, 2006), pp. 249–72 (p. 251). The proverb was familiar throughout the Low Countries, as evidenced by a number of Dutch and German prints. Representative examples include emblems (Gabriel Rollenhagen, *Nucleus Emblematum* (Utrecht, 1613), emblem 95), broadsides (a print by Erhard Schön published in Nuremberg in 1540, contains a woodcut of the motif with the proverbial text, 'was hilfft mich sün liche oder prill | Weyl ich doch selbs nicht schen will'), and paintings (Jan Steen, *The Drunken Couple*, c. 1688–72, oil on panel, Amsterdam).

¹¹⁹ George Wither, *Collection of Emblemes* (London, 1635), 2L3^r.

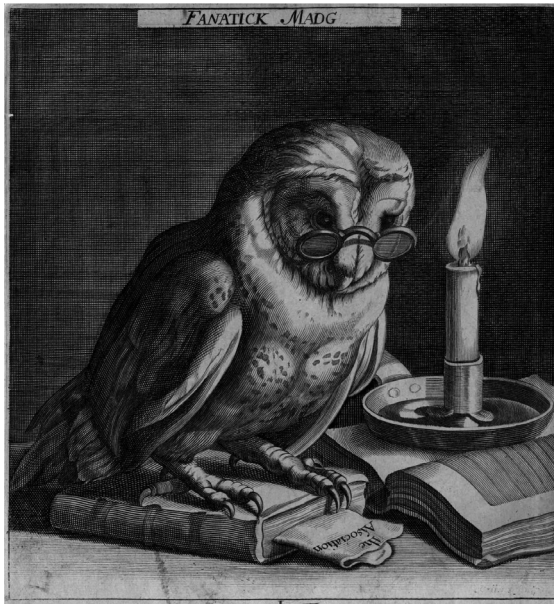


Figure 12. *Fanatic Madg* (BM Satires 228.I). Engraved broadside variously dated 1647–88. © Trustees of the British Museum, London.

presumably alluding to the Eastern Association of parliamentary forces.¹²⁰ The owl ('madg') is clearly associated with zealous ('fanatick') Puritans, as the accompanying verse makes clear: 'Lets pull [the] Popysh Bishops downe and Monarchy Expell | Then Liberty of Conscience Shall to euery one be free'. The verse ends by lampooning the revolutionary goal of the reformers: once the country has been purged of Papistry and Monarchy, the Puritan 'Tinckers & Coblers all may preach' in their place.

The royalist campaign to associate the blindness and folly of Puritans and parliamentarians with the figure of the owl was completed in a series of prints satirizing Oliver Cromwell and, after his death, Richard Cromwell. The first of these is *Danck-Predikation* (thanksgiving sermon), a Dutch broadside printed in 1651,

which contains an engraving of the interior of a church, with Cromwell preaching to its congregation after the victorious Battle of Worcester. Drawing upon earlier Reformation satires, Cromwell is figured as a papal monster, complete with tiara and dragon's tail. By including scenes of theft (a boy picking pockets in the audience), plunder (an open window reveals the sale of goods plundered during the Battle), and heresy (an inset panel features the ghost of Bernhard Knipperdolling, leader of the Münster Anabaptists, rising from a grave to hand Cromwell a book), the print satirizes the 'purity' of the Puritan cause. Embodying all of the elements

¹²⁰ *Fanatic Madg*, British Museum, Satires 228. 1. The print is attributed to Jacob Collins, and although it is clearly based on a 1625 print by Cornelis Bloemaert, the precise date is uncertain. While it might have been published to satirize the Eastern Association during the 1640s, it may also have been printed in the 1680s to tarnish the campaign to expel James II with the memory (and ultimately, the failure) of the Civil War.

of the satire — heresy, greed, and monstrosity — is the figure of the owl, which hovers above Cromwell at the pulpit (Figure 13).

A Dutch print satirizing Cromwell's dismissal of the Rump Parliament in 1653, *Dit Hys is te Hver* (This House is to Let), features Cromwell's famous remark ('Be gone you rogues | You haue Sate long enough') and the ejection of Members from the House, including a group of four led out by an owl wearing spectacles and a collar in which a candle is attached (Figure 14). To ensure that the viewer correctly identifies the bird — and thereby grasps the double sense of *parliament* as both the institution being dissolved and the collective noun for a group of owls — the label

'This is an Oule' is written underneath.

Another Dutch print of the same year, *Olivier Cromwel, Proteckteur GeeWeest*, is a caricature of its subject (Figure 15). As part of her study of representations of Cromwell, Laura Lunger Knoppers describes the image as follows:

Cromwell wears plain civilian dress, with a fur-lined coat, simple collar and cuffs, and a beaver hat. But now a raven perches atop Cromwell's broad-brimmed hat, to which stag's horns and a feather have also been added. Spectacles are perched on his oversized nose, and a smoking pipe is in his mouth. To further ridicule the figure of the Protector, an owl, who likewise sports a horned cap and spectacles, perches on Cromwell's right shoulder.¹²¹

Useful as a summary, Knoppers's analysis of the image fails to address its iconographic elements, all of which point to the identification of Cromwell with the



Figure 13. Detail. *Danck-Predikation* (BM Satires 818). Engraved broadside dated 1651. © Trustees of the British Museum.

¹²¹ Laura Lunger Knoppers, *Constructing Cromwell: Ceremony, Portrait, and Print, 1645–1661* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 88.

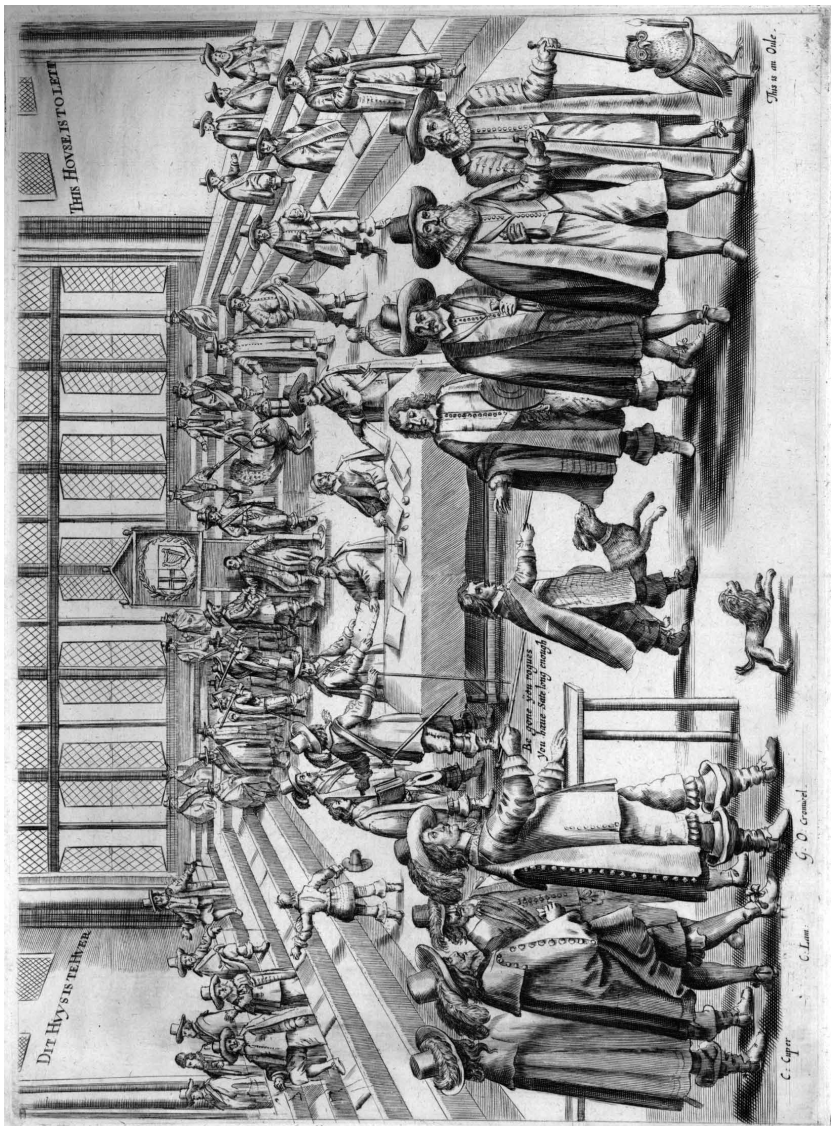


Figure 14. *Dit Huis is te Huer* (BM Satires 858). Engraved Dutch broadside dated 1653. © Trustees of the British Museum.



Figure 15. *Olivier Cromwel, Proteckteur GeeWeest* (BM Satires 866).
Engraved Dutch broadside dated 1653. © Trustees of the British Museum.

figure of Nobody, the epitome of foolishness. 'Spectacles as aids to failing sight had been popularly distrusted since their invention', writes Gerta Calmann, noting that they 'were often used to ridicule their wearers' since they 'signified pretensions to learnedness, or specious truth, and belonged clearly to the fool's outfit'. Feathered caps often suggest foolish ostentation, but what about a whole bird? The bird on top of Cromwell's hat, identified by Knoppers as a raven, is for Calmann 'an attribute that is iconographically extremely rare', and one that is almost always used in connection with the Nobody figure.¹²² While the horns on Cromwell's hat clearly suggest the sexual folly of the cuckold,¹²³ and perhaps foolish ostentation, they may also be a corrupted reference to the traditional winged headdress of the Nobody. The pipe and feather similarly insinuate garishness and presumption. The owl on his shoulder, a symbol of blindness and folly, and, by this time, a well-worn emblem of the Puritan, needs no further explanation.

When Oliver Cromwell died on 3 September 1658, he passed on more than just the title of Lord Protector to his son: Richard Cromwell would inherit the same symbolic association with the owl that had plagued his father and his cause. In *Lord Richard Cromwel*, a Dutch broadside of 1658–59, Richard is caricatured as a cooper hammering away at a barrel with a mallet, from which a parliament of owls wearing spectacles and clutching candles escapes, each crying 'King!' as it does so (Figure 16). An inset panel on the left depicts a scene from Aesop's fable of *The Frogs Desiring a King*, with a stork devouring frogs as Jove looks on, while another panel on the right displays a state proclamation delivered to a courtyard full of on-lookers (presumably announcing Richard as his father's successor). As Annabel Patterson has noted, Aesop's 'frog fable took on a new lease of life' during the Civil War, Interregnum, and Restoration periods, where it participated in the republican debate in print and pulpit.¹²⁴ The present broadside presents the fable as an analogy: just as the frogs were wrong to question divine authority and were punished accordingly, so too has the parliament of owls in rejecting the monarchy ended up with Richard Cromwell.

¹²² Calmann, 'The Picture of Nobody', p. 66.

¹²³ As Jason McElligott has shown, 'Cromwell was invariably portrayed as both a lecher and a cuckold' in Royalist propaganda: 'The Politics of Sexual Libel: Royalist Propaganda in the 1640s', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 67 (2004), 75–99 (p. 83). I am indebted to David Scott Kastan for pointing this reference out to me.

¹²⁴ Annabel Patterson, *Fables of Power: Aesopian Writing and Political History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), p. 94. In chap. 3, Patterson traces how various editions, translations, and commentaries of Aesop's fable were intimately tied to partisan politics.



Figure 16. *Lord Richard Cromwel* (BM Satires 921). Engraved Dutch broadside dated 1658–59. © Trustees of the British Museum.

Although printed in London in 1659, the final print in this series is clearly informed by earlier Dutch satires of Oliver Cromwell. The broadside, entitled *His Highnesse Hoo. Hoo. Hoo.*, caricatures Richard Cromwell as a giant owl (with human legs) astride a horse, with a plumed hat on his head and a pipe in his beak, as he is being mobbed by a group of smaller birds (Figure 17). The woodcut of Cromwell as the ‘Protector of *Lubberland*, and chief Captain of the night Guards’ is accompanied by the following verse:

I am resolved to ride in State,
Not caring what the small Birds prate.
I’le keep my Seat without controul,
If once I flinch they’l call me Owle.

Like his father in the earlier Dutch print, Richard is mocked for his foolishness; his ridiculously gaudy hat, notably bigger than his head, and his outrageously long pipe speak for themselves. The print also highlights Richard’s presumption: in the verse, by obstinately ignoring the ‘small Birds prate’ (possibly the disaffected Army) and refusing to abandon his ‘Seat without controul’, and in the woodcut, by donning military attire, riding a cavalry horse, and carrying an officer’s sword and powder horn (Richard’s lack of military experience was a frequent subject of criticism).

Conclu-hoo-hoo-sion

The owl's association with Athena/Minerva and wisdom was given renewed life by Renaissance humanists who sought to recover and reinvigorate all aspects of their classical heritage. While this tradition continued (and survives to this day), other symbolic associations flourished. 'The power and richness of the owl as a pictorial motif', writes Mariko Miyazaki, 'lies in its versatility and long tradition of negative traits, such as blindness and uncleanness',¹²⁵ traits that were readily adaptable for the stigmatization of minorities and unorthodox groups. Thus, in medieval England the owl served as the embodiment of Jewish blindness, folly, and filthiness. As a nocturnal predator, the owl also symbolically reflected projected fears and anxieties of Jewish crimes against

Christians, especially Christian children, under cover of darkness. In the same way that the sun took away the owl's ability to hunt effectively, so too did the light of the Gospel reveal Jewish error and infidelity, the light of day also diminishing the threat of the owl, and the Jews, making them easier to identify, demystify, and contain. From its nest in the textual and visual narratives of the poems, bestiaries, and ecclesiastical architecture of the Middle Ages, the owl survived as an antisemitic emblem in England long after the Jews had been expelled from its shores — evidenced by the many references to 'owle-eyed' Jews and their inability to acknowledge the Light of Christ and his Gospel.

The various Reformations irreversibly changed the political and religious landscape of Europe, and as with other powerful symbols, the antisemitic owl was adapted to suit. As charges of judaizing were hurled between Catholics and



Figure 17. *His Highnesse Hoo. Hoo. Hoo.* (London, 1659). Clarke Print Collection, Worcester College, Oxford. Reproduced as the frontispiece of *The Clarke Papers*, vol. III, ed. by C. H. Firth (New York: Longmans, 1899), where the present copy was sourced.

¹²⁵ Miyazaki, 'Misericord Owls and Medieval Anti-Semitism', p. 37.

Protestants alike, the owl again emerged as an emblem of Jewish perversity and monstrosity. Fuelled by this sectarian rhetoric and Robert Persons's unfortunate choice of John Howlet as a pseudonym, the owl became closely aligned with the Jesuits and their Catholic mission to restore England to the old faith. Leaving their Romish nest, Jesuit conspirators preyed on good Protestants as they flew through the country under cover of darkness and disguise, and London playwrights were quick to seize upon their popular identification with the owl.

In the seventeenth century, the Puritan factions at Parliament gained more power and presented a new threat, while at the same time lending themselves nicely to caricature and satire. As with Catholics, Puritans were charged with judaizing tendencies, and the connection with the owl was made. In addition to symbolizing the Puritans' reversion to Judaism, the owl was adapted as an anti-Puritan image because it too was a 'roundhead', a bird unique in having both its eyes at the front of its (round) face, and both congregated in parliaments. In so doing, the author of *My Bird is a Round-head* drew on more than a quirk of biology and a fortuitous choice of collective noun, but on a much longer tradition of stigmatizing unorthodox religious groups, one that had persisted since the thirteenth century.

‘ROMANCING THE HANDBOOK’: SCENES OF DETECTION IN *ARDEN OF FAVERSHAM*

Heather Kerr

In this paper I explore the treatment of circumstantial evidence in the plotting of an anonymous Elizabethan drama, *The Tragedy of Master Arden of Faversham* (c. 1592), that represents a notorious ‘true crime’ from 1551.¹ In particular, I draw attention to the drama’s intersections with legal discourses and the inherited Ciceronian topico-rhetorical tradition available to Elizabethan readers in the form of handbooks and related ‘unofficial’ books of instruction. In drawing attention to these discursive intersections I examine the drama’s formal elements as evidence of a dramatic logic. However, the question must remain open how far the outlines of that logic can be said to trace the actual practices of Elizabethan pretrial process, or indeed, an Elizabethan ‘mentality’ or ‘cultural anxiety’.²

Early modern English dramatic works often draw attention to the status of evidence and the means by which characters attempt to establish degrees of

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¹ I use the Revels edition by M. L. Wine, *The Tragedy of Master Arden of Faversham* (London: Methuen, 1973). All quotations are taken from this edition and denoted by scene and line numbers.

² See, for example, Malcolm Gaskill, *Crime and Mentalities in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) and the methodological issues raised by Alexandra Shepard, ‘From Anxious Patriarchs to Refined Gentlemen? Manhood in Britain, c. 1500–1700’, *Journal of British Studies*, 44 (2005), 281–95.

probability and proof.³ My attention is on the play's scene of detection and the discovery of Thomas Arden's murder. I suggest that the scene of detection performs particular cultural work on behalf of an idea of the common peace exemplified in the handbooks for Justices of the Peace and other citizens who are charged with the task of evidence gathering. I further suggest that we need to read the scene of detection as a function of a larger cultural interest in, if not 'anxiety' around, evidence gathering and its handling. The scene is read in this regard because, paradoxically, it is so *untroubled* by the process of detection and the interpretation of the circumstantial evidence. After noting the stages by which the crime is detected, I consider the significance of the figure of Franklin who, with the Mayor and the watch, performs the diligent gathering of the circumstantial evidence. I suggest that the confidence and rapidity with which this takes place is a function of an idealized view of what was a sometimes problematic and frequently haphazard process. We need to set aside our contemporary assumption about the 'obvious' centrality of circumstantial evidence to various stages of legal procedure. This assumption is a post-eighteenth-century phenomenon made possible by a (long) process that has been called 'institutional migration'⁴ and technical refunctioning of rhetorical and legal ideas of argumentation based on probabilities.

Arden of Faversham belongs to a small group of plays, known as 'domestic tragedies', depicting petty treason, the murder of a husband by his wife.⁵ As the

³ This paper comes out of my research on English early modern drama and legal history, in particular, my work on the philosophical and rhetorical background of the rules of evidence and the investigative procedures of the common and civil law in England that were emerging during the period. My interest in this area was prompted by the frequent employment of a 'false witness' plot element in early modern drama in England. Of the plays to 1615, 115 make use of trial scenes, understood in extended senses of that term (see, for example, the definitions in Subha Mukherji, 'False Trials in Shakespeare, Massinger and Ford', *Essays in Criticism*, 56 (2006), 219–40). Lorna Hutson's important book on *The Invention of Suspicion: Law and Mimesis in Shakespeare and Renaissance Drama* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) came to my attention after submission of this project.

⁴ On 'institutional migration', see Barbara Shapiro, 'Beyond Reasonable Doubt' and 'Probable Cause': *Historical Perspectives on the Anglo-American Law of Evidence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), p. 247.

⁵ On petty treason, see Frances E. Dolan, 'The Subordinate('s) Plot: Petty Treason and the Forms of Domestic Rebellion', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 43 (1992), 317–40; Leanore Lieblein, 'The Context of Murder in English Domestic Plays, 1590–1610', *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900*, 23 (1983), 181–96. On *Arden of Faversham*, see Lena Cowen Orlin, *Private Matters and Public Culture in Post-Reformation England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994).

category of crime suggests, petty treason exemplifies early modern English culture's simultaneous investment in normative models of hierarchy and analogy. As a genre, domestic tragedy is understood to gather up a number of cultural anxieties about the problematic distinctions between private and public that characterize the analogy between microcosm and macrocosm, household and state.⁶ The 'true crime' story of Thomas Arden's murder by Alice Arden, her lover Mosby, and the hired killers Black Will and Shakebag, and the involvement of servants and neighbours in the deed, was a notorious instance of petty treason. It was so troubling in this regard that Holinshed and his fellow editors included it in the *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland*: 'The which murder, for the horribleness thereof, although otherwise it may seem to be but a private matter and therefore, as it were, impertinent to this history, I have thought good to set [...] forth somewhat at large.'⁷ Critical discourse on the play also regards it as exemplary, in particular for what it can tell us about responses to the pressures of social change.

Two strands of scholarship have been particularly influential since the 1980s. There is a strong critical literature on gender relations and the household, emergent ideas of marriage, and the discourse around the law of coverture.⁸ In the *Chronicle* this concern is given prominence; indeed critics have documented the 'process of purging the story of its extra-domestic elements'.⁹ In Holinshed and *Arden of Faversham* the primary focus is on the 'rebellion' of Arden's wife and her lover, the upwardly mobile servant Mosby: they are dangerously 'insubordinate' and threaten social order. In parallel to this, the play has been read as an exemplary

⁶ Garrett A. Sullivan Jr, 'Arden of Faversham and the Early Modern Household', in *Early Modern English Drama: A Critical Companion*, ed. by Garrett A. Sullivan Jr, Patrick Cheney, and Andrew Hadfield (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 73–81. More broadly, see Paul Raffield, *Images and Cultures of Law in Early Modern England: Justice and Political Power, 1558–1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

⁷ See the appendix of source and cognate materials in Wine's edition of *The Tragedy of Master Arden of Faversham*; for Holinshed, see p. 148.

⁸ Catherine Belsey's essay, 'Alice Arden's Crime', remains influential in studies of the discourse around women's contradictory position as wife: *The Subject of Tragedy: Identity and Difference in Renaissance Drama* (London: Methuen, 1985), pp. 129–48. Something of the Elizabethan debate is evident when Alice says 'Henceforth I'll be thy slave, no more thy wife' (*Arden*, 13. 106).

⁹ Orlin, *Private Matters and Public Culture*, p. 64. Holinshed elides any reference to Alice's important family connections as stepdaughter to Lord North. Mosby is nonetheless referred to as his servant. Wine's notes demonstrate the editing out of Alice's family connections between the various manuscript versions of the story and Holinshed's 'impertinent history'. The play-text further avoids this topic and provides a 'Lord Clifford' as a substitute.

instance of the cultural anxieties around emergent models of land tenure that are accelerated by the dissolution of monasteries as well as broader economic problems in the sixteenth century. Critical literature has focused on the effects of enclosure, absentee landlords, and erosion of communal obligations.¹⁰ In the context of the Arden story, the *Chronicle* mentions the disaffection that these new models of land acquisition could generate. The play amplifies this into moments of open hostility.¹¹ We might analogize a relationship between the subject matter of these two critical trends: both the cuckold/wittol and the absentee landlord draw attention to questions of the management of 'property'. I will return to this analogy later.

For the moment I want to focus on Holinshed's stated reason for including the 'impertinent' details of Arden's murder: 'I have thought good to set it forth somewhat at large, having the instructions delivered to me by them, that have some diligence to gather the true understanding of the circumstances'.¹² Holinshed's reference to the careful gathering and interpretation of the 'circumstances' around the crime registers a further discursive context for understanding the exemplary nature of the Arden story. In a survey of 'the seven types of historiographic marginality', Richard Helgerson draws attention to the detective story as a generic outgrowth of the Arden story,¹³ and it could be said that the *Chronicle* offers an exemplary instance of how to 'gather the true understanding of circumstances' that still drives the contemporary narrative of detection. More specifically though, Holinshed's version is notable for the way in which it elaborates the evidentiary detail around detection and accusation and dwells on the circumstantial evidence

¹⁰ New models of knowing and using the land are explored by David Attwell, 'Property, Status and the Subject in a Middle-Class Tragedy: *Arden of Faversham*', *English Literary Renaissance*, 21 (1991), 328–48 (pp. 336–37); Garrett A. Sullivan Jr, "Arden Lay Murdered in That Plot of Ground": Surveying, Land, and *Arden of Faversham*', *ELH*, 61 (1994), 231–52; and, generally, Orlin, *Private Matters and Public Culture*.

¹¹ James R. Keller outlines the practices of land acquisition in the period, arguing that the 'historical' Arden's behaviour was well within the acceptable standards of his day: 'Arden's Land Acquisitions and the Dissolution of the Monasteries', *English Language Notes*, 30 (1993), 20–24. More recently, Ian McAdam has explored 'the power structure of the Tudor state contemporary to the murder' and 'the Reformation context': 'Protestant Manliness in *Arden of Faversham*', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 45 (2003), 42–72.

¹² *Arden*, ed. by Wine, p. 148.

¹³ Richard Helgerson, 'Murder in Faversham: Holinshed's Impertinent History', in *The Historical Imagination in Early Modern Britain: History, Rhetoric, and Fiction, 1500–1800*, ed. by Donald R. Kelley and David Harris Sacks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 133–58; see note to type two 'history of crime' (p. 137 n. 6).

of footprints in the snow and blood at the scene. Its narrative is strikingly similar to extant records of 'preliminary examination', both in style and in substance.¹⁴ It is impossible to discover whether the *Chronicle* editors had access to the documentary record of preliminary examinations related to the original trial.¹⁵ Rather than attempt to 'ground' the varieties of narrative evidence in 'Law', for example, I am more interested in the broader cultural attention, in rhetoric, fiction, and law, to techniques of evidence gathering and interpretation, an exemplary feature of the *Chronicle* that is elaborated in the later *Arden of Faversham*. In summary form, I provide the play's scenes of detection:

FRANKLIN. Know you this hand-towel and this knife?

ALICE. [...] What mean such questions?

FRANKLIN. I fear me he was murdered in this house

And carried to the fields, for from this place

Backwards and forwards may you see

The print of many feet within the snow.

And look about this chamber where we are,

And you shall find part of his guiltless blood;

For in his slipshoe did I find some rushes,

Which argueth he was murdered in this room.

MAYOR. Look in the place where he was wont to sit. —

See, see! His blood! It is too manifest. (14. 383, 391–401)

*Stage Direction: Here enter the Mayor, Mosby, Alice, Franklin, Michael, and Susan
[guarded by the Watch]*

ALICE. [...] The more I sound his name, the more he bleeds.

This blood condemns me, and in gushing forth

Speaks as it falls and asks me why I did it. (16. 4–6)

¹⁴ For example, see John H. Langbein, *Prosecuting Crime in the Renaissance: England, Germany, France* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974) for phrases such as the statutory requirement 'to examine diligently' (p. 68) and to make 'a dewe and a diligent and a secrete serche' (p. 72). Very few records of this type have survived. Langbein's Appendix to chap. 4 prints extant examinations (from 1519) comparable in style and tone with the narration in Holinshed (pp. 98–103).

¹⁵ We could compare the vocabulary of the later *Contention Between Liberality and Prodigality* (1602). This 'Pleasant comedie' includes the direction to the allegorical figure of Equity to 'examine more diligently, the maner of this outrageous robbery'. *Liberality and Prodigality* has been shown to make 'clear reference to an important sixteenth-century development in the criminal law which is even now the foundation of the whole system of preliminary investigation': William Dean, 'The Law of Criminal Procedure in *The Contention Between Liberality and Prodigality*', *Renaissance and Reformation*, n.s., 1 (1977), 59–71 (p. 62).

FRANKLIN. [to Mosby] Study not for an answer, look not down.
 His purse and girdle found at thy bed's head
 Witness sufficiently thou didst the deed. (16. 13–15)

What is the significance of the fact that Franklin undertakes this model detective work? In contrast to McCall, I do not think Franklin's unofficial status is anomalous.¹⁶ Instead, I think we should pause over his speedy diligence and practical effectiveness. I propose that in the figure of Franklin, a model detective invented by the playwright, *Arden of Faversham* draws on two discursive sets: ideas about 'land' and ideas about 'law'. This conjunction is not, in itself, surprising, given the history of English common law. Franklin embodies, on the one hand, an idea of a propertied class, and on the other an idea of the responsible private citizen whose participation is necessary to the maintenance of the common peace.¹⁷ His name suggests a kind of generic, 'exemplary' identity commensurate with his apparently choric literary function.¹⁸ In my analysis of the play's dramatic logic, Franklin can perform a kind of prismatic function through which it is possible to refract ideas about law, rhetoric, and genre.¹⁹

Franklin's name and social status as established independent landholder and friend of the newly rich Arden recalls the earlier social category of 'franklins', a group of relatively independent freeholders who, by the sixteenth century, had become known as 'yeomen'.²⁰ In the sixteenth century, the 'franklin or yeoman'

¹⁶ Tom McCall, 'Liquid Politics: Towards a Theorization of "Bourgeois" Tragic Drama', *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 98 (1999), 593–622. McCall argues that 'it is not a constable but [...] the capitalist's best friend, Franklin, who performs this satisfying closure of interrogation-unto-conviction' (p. 611).

¹⁷ On local participation, see Cynthia Herrup, *The Common Peace: Participation and the Criminal Law in Seventeenth Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), and Herrup, 'New Shoes and Mutton Pies: Investigative Responses to Theft in Seventeenth-Century East Sussex', *Historical Journal*, 27 (1984), 811–30; and J. H. Gleason, *The Justices of the Peace in England 1558–1640* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969).

¹⁸ Alexander Leggatt rejects the view that Franklin is a choric figure: 'Arden of Faversham', *Shakespeare Survey*, 36 (1983), 121–33.

¹⁹ See for example *Rhetoric and Law in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Victoria Kahn and Lorna Hutson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), in particular Barbara Shapiro's essay, 'Classical Rhetoric and the English Law of Evidence', pp. 54–72.

²⁰ The category of Franklin is well known to Chaucer scholars, and for the relevant period there is a significant body of scholarship. Henrik Specht, *Chaucer's Franklin in the Canterbury Tales: The Social and Literary Background of a Chaucerian Character* (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1981). Franklins were freeholders of some substance holding land typically in one of the free

class was that which felt the brunt of social obligations around maintenance of the common peace: 'An added peculiarity of the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth-century legal structure may be that middling men [such as the yeoman] found themselves newly active in the legal process and newly threatened in their activism.'²¹ Franklin, his name an echo of the analogous social category, may be said to represent an instance of a general trend. In acting as an agent of criminal discovery, Franklin's role is typical, rather than anomalous, because the legal system is characterized by local activism of this kind. It is a function of the 'participatory nature of English government. Effective government could not do without the willingness of men to act as agents of central institutions'.²² In this he seems to represent an idealized instance of the activism specified in the guides for amateur legal investigators whose participation was so central to the maintenance of the common peace. His name is anachronistic, pointing 'backwards', a retrospectivity that is in keeping perhaps with the play's attempts at historicism.²³ At the same time, his actions

lay tenures, sometimes owing rent or light services (p. 65). Larger holders served in the courts of hundred and shire (p. 65). By the end of the fourteenth century, they were wealthy, powerful, and independent landowners (p. 91). Through taking both profits from the demesne and tenants' rent, the franklins had enough power to have created 'sub manors' (p. 77). In legal and material terms, they were on an equal footing with many gentry in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (p. 91), and Specht classes them as effectively gentry: 'Some, perhaps many of the franklins in the 14th and 15th centuries formed a group of people who, by birth, by wealth, or by achievement were entitled to call themselves "gentlemen". By common esteem, way of life, and social position, they were ranked among the "gentils" of medieval society, as members of the country gentry of late medieval England' (p. 117). For the Elizabethan period, and the equation 'yeomen or franklein' in the 1580s, see Mildred Campbell *The English Yeoman under Elizabeth and the Early Stuarts* (London: Merlin Press, 1942), p. 13, n. 16. Note in relation to the 'doubling' and 'mirroring' effect of Arden and Franklin: 'the frequent criticism of the English yeoman for his unethical business practices, and the ideal light in which he is so often portrayed, were both traceable to the virtually unanimous recognition of the importance of his vocation' (Albert J. Schmidt, *The Yeoman in Tudor and Stuart England* (Washington, DC: Folger Shakespeare Library, 1961), p. 12).

²¹ Herrup, *The Common Peace*, p. 206.

²² Herrup, *The Common Peace*, p. 205.

²³ See Lisa Hopkins, 'Kings, Queens and Petty Treason: Imaging Female Rule in *Arden of Faversham*', in *Writing Renaissance Queens: Texts by and about Elizabeth I and Mary, Queen of Scots* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2002), pp. 89–103. With regard to my present topic, Franklin allows us to see the play's investment in an English common law tendency to attribute ancient, native, or naturalized origins to newly necessary procedures derived from non-native discursive and institutional resources (Roman-Canon and civil law processes, for example). See also Shapiro, *Beyond Reasonable Doubt*.

point 'forwards', representing newly pressing Elizabethan social obligations. Franklin follows the recommendations for organizing a preliminary investigation and examination, especially when handling circumstantial evidence. Documentation of the preliminary examination was statutorily required after 1554.²⁴ The recommendations regarding investigative process are published in handbook form.

The handbooks setting out techniques for evidence gathering and evaluation are sometimes referred to as 'justicing manuals', but they derive from the classical topico-rhetorical tradition developed by Cicero and Quintilian and widely available throughout the medieval and early modern periods. The handbooks of rhetoric used by schoolboys and law students, constables and gentlemen, mayors and Justices of the Peace make available material that supplements any formal curriculum. From the time of Aristotle, arguments drawn from 'circumstances' (known as 'inartificial' or 'inartistic' proofs) were considered unworthy of the orator. Yet these are the very techniques that might be expected to aid the amateur in his preliminary examination, investigations, and deliberations.²⁵ The growing emphasis on circumstantial evidence at trial suggests that the techniques for determining degrees of proof and probability outlined in the topico-rhetorical tradition had new relevance by the mid-1500s, if not before.²⁶ Writing about the

²⁴ See Langbein, *Prosecuting Crime*; also John H. Langbein, *Torture and the Law of Proof: Europe and England in the Ancien Regime* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), and John H. Langbein, 'Historical Foundations of the Law of Evidence: A View from the Ryder Sources', *Columbia Law Review*, 96 (1996), 1168–1202.

²⁵ See for example Shapiro, 'Beyond Reasonable Doubt', and the summary in W. S. Howell, *Logic and Rhetoric in England, 1500–1700* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), p. 156: 'Quintilian tells the orator that while "inartificial" proofs are central to forensic arguments they are proofs adopted by the orator which lie outside the art of speaking, therefore they need not be elaborated in his treatise (*Institutio Oratoria* v. i. 1,2). "Inartificial" proofs are arguments given to the orator by the case itself (v. ix). For example, the murder weapon and other objects are members of this class of proof (v. i. 2). Ramus, who recast Aristotelian rhetoric in the Renaissance, says that "inartificial proof" by itself and through its own force does not create belief". These kinds of proof are called "indications". Quintilian remarks that the Greeks call indications "probabilities" (v. ix. 8). They do not involve a necessary conclusion because they are not complete proofs. Their force depends on extraneous support from other probabilities, the surrounding "circumstances that may confirm a suspicion" (v. ix. 10–11). The Latin equivalents of these indications or probabilities are *signum*, a sign, or *vestigium*, a trace (v. ix. 9).'

²⁶ My earlier work on the history of the emergent law of evidence, rhetoric, and legal handbooks in this period was particularly concerned with false witness testimony and the use of forged documents to complicate dramatic plots. Details of the rhetorical and legal handbooks are available

relation of rhetoric to the developing English law of evidence, Barbara Shapiro remarks that

[t]he transition from general rhetorical manual to the specifically legal environment is readily apparent. Shortly after the justices of the peace were required by statute of 1554–55 to examine accused felony suspects, compilers of a new genre, the justicing manual, were directing justices of the peace to utilize the 'causes of suspicion' to organize their examination. Suspicion proved to be a concept that could be employed in a number of different legal contexts to serve a variety of institutional and procedural functions.²⁷

The *Chronicle's* description of the Mayor and others 'viewing diligentlie the maner of his bodie and hurts' is a direct echo of the instructions to those charged with detection of the crime and preliminary examination of witnesses and suspects at the scene of the crime. The narrative continues:

and marking further, [they] espied certeine footsteps, by reason of the snow [...]. Then the maior commended euerie man to staie [...]. Then the maior and his companie that were with him in the house, and knowing hir euill demeanor in past times, examined hir of the matter [...]. Then they examined hir seruants, and in the examination, by reason of a peece of his heare and bloud found neere to the house [...] and likewise by the knife [...] and the clout [...] which they found in the tub [...] they all confessed the matter [...]. Then they were all attached, and committed to prison.²⁸

William Lambarde's popular manual, *Eirenarcha or the Office of the Justices of Peace*, provides the 'points that may ingender Suspition'. Later editions set out an elaborate but compact Ramist-style diagram, first included in 1588.²⁹ Compare the list below of 'circumstances [...] to be considered' from the entirely derivative handbook by Michael Dalton, *The Countrey Justice, conteyning the practice of Justices of the Peace* (London, 1618). Signs of this kind help the Justice of the Peace 'prove things by conjecture'. He is encouraged to draw his arguments from 'persons' and 'things':

2 Quality

His parents, if they were wicked, and given to the same kind of fault.

in, for example, Heather Kerr, 'Thomas Garter's *Susanna*: Kerr, "Pollicie" and "True Reporte"', *AUMLA*, 72 (1989), 183–202; Heather Kerr, 'Sir Thomas Elyot, "Marcus Geminus" and a Comedy for Elizabeth I at Oxford, 1566', *AUMLA*, 73 (1990), 101–15; and Heather Kerr, 'Aaron's Letter and Acts of Reading: The Text as Evidence in *Titus Andronicus*', *AUMLA*, 77 (1992), 1–19. See also Gleason Putnam and Bertha H. Putnam, *Early Treatises on the Practice of the Justices of the Peace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924).

²⁷ Shapiro, 'Classical Rhetoric', p. 64.

²⁸ *Arden*, ed. by Wine, p. 157.

²⁹ William Lambarde, *Eirenarcha or the Office of the Justices of Peace* (London, 1588), p. 218.

His abilitie of body; sc. If strong & swift, or weake or sickly not like to doe the Act.

His nature, if civill or hastie, wittie and subtile, a quarreller, pilferer, or bloudie minded, &c.

His meanes; if he hath wheron to live, or not.

His trade; for if a man liveth idly or vagrant [...] it is good cause to arrest him upon suspition, if there have been any felony committed.

His companie; if Ruffians, suspected persons, or his being in companie with any [of] the offenders.

His course of life; sc. if a common Alehouse-hanter, or ryottous in dyet, play, or apparel. Whether he be of evill fame, or report.

Whether he hath committed the like offence before; or if he hath had a pardon, or beene acquitted, for like felonie before [...].

3 Markes or Signes.

If he hath any bloud about him.

If any of the goods stollen, be in his possession.

The change of his countenance, his blushing, looking downewards, silence, trembling.

His answers doubtfull, or repugnant.

If he offered agreement or composition.

The measure of his foote, or horse foote.

The bleeding of the dead bodie in his presence.

If, being charged with the felony, or called theefe, he said nothing. (p. 266)³⁰

The general correspondences between this list and the play's 'signs' will be readily apparent. These manuals of rhetoric and 'justicing' are vehicles for low-status but nevertheless useful techniques, whether for cobbling together persuasive arguments or grappling with a knotty case of possible criminal activity. In the sixteenth century these techniques became newly relevant to the exercise of 'practical logic' in the 'decentralized, essentially non-bureaucratic' aspect of policing the common peace:

³⁰ Cf. Lambarde, *Eirenarcha*, pp. 220–21. In handbooks of rhetoric these 'places of confirmation' are derived from Cicero, *De Inventione* (e.g. I. 34–43); for example Leonard Cox, *The Art or Crafte of Rhetoryke* (London, 1532; STC 5947); Abraham Fraunce, *The Lawiers Logike* (London, 1588; STC 11343); Thomas Wilson, *The Arte of Rhetorique* (London, 1553; STC 25799); and the latter a source for Crompton's law-French manual, *Loffice Et auctoritie de Justices de Peace* (London, 1583; STC 10978). For details see Kerr, 'Sir Thomas Elyot', p. 154, nn. 24 and 25; Shapiro, 'Classical Rhetoric', p. 66, writes that 'Dalton's "circumstances [...] to be considered" in examining accused felons are to be found in Lambarde, Crompton, the civil law texts, Cicero, Quintilian, the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, and Wilson. Dalton's handbook is the basis for 18th and 19th century successors and achieved the status of legal authority. However, its more modest goal was the same as the earlier 16th century justicing manuals: to assist those who "have not been much conversant in the studies of the law of this realm"'.

The justicing handbooks of Lambarde, Crompton, and Dalton, with their indebtedness to the rhetoricians, were undoubtedly important in familiarizing trial judges, jurors, and the literate more generally with the concept of circumstantial evidence. Its accompanying machinery of presumption may also be traced to the Roman-canon legal tradition.³¹

The Roman-canon legal tradition is a trajectory I do not pursue here.

In contrast to the confident-sounding handbook literature and the rather 'no-nonsense', 'common sense' tone of both Holinshed and *Arden of Faversham*, the available record suggests ambivalence, if not anxiety, around the handling of circumstantial evidence in legal argument. Shapiro has examined the mid-sixteenth-century references to circumstantial evidence and presumption in the published State Trials. Sir Nicholas Throckmorton (1554) complained at his trial that 'For [...] I know how by persuasions, [...] inferring, conjecturing [...] the circumstances, [...] that unlearned men be enchanted to think and judge [things to be treason which are not]'. In 1581 Edmund Campion objected to his treason trial 'by shifts of probabilities and conjectural surmises'.³² The scene of detection in *Arden of Faversham* is notable for the comparative lack of ambivalence about the method, or confusion over the status and meaning of evidence uncovered by Franklin's and the Mayor's searches. Our own everyday familiarity with protocols of detection and conjecture, available in (for example) popular fictions of various kinds, obscure this feature of the retellings. Can we see in this early modern dramatic representation of efficient and correct detection an example of the play's 'participat[ion] in the construction of [its] culture's ideology'?³³

I think that Franklin is crucial to this possibility. The play represents concerns around the handling of circumstantial evidence, but it does so self-reflexively and in a scene remote from the scene of detection. The character Franklin experiences a kind of 'hermeneutic anxiety' that is represented at the somatic level.

³¹ Shapiro, 'Classical Rhetoric', p. 69.

³² Cited in Shapiro, *Beyond Reasonable Doubt*, pp. 212, 213. Presumption and circumstantial evidence were considered 'a lower species of proof' (ibid., p. 212). But there was some 'confusion' in the period, and even into the seventeenth century there is 'ambivalence concerning circumstantial evidence' (pp. 213–14). Sir Edward Coke and Sir Matthew Hale both recognized that circumstantial evidence must often be employed by courts, but they expressed considerable caution as to its use: 'judge not too hastily upon bare presumption' (cited in ibid., p. 214). While sometimes necessary, it was still viewed as a less desirable form of evidence (p. 215). Jurors, for example, were given no advice as to how to evaluate 'circumstances' or 'how to deal with testimony which did not mesh with circumstantial evidence' (p. 215).

³³ Orlin, *Private Matters and Public Culture*, p. 13.

ARDEN. Come Master Franklin, onwards with your tale.
 FRANKLIN. I assure you sir, you task me much.
 A heavy blood is gathered at my heart,
 And on the sudden is my wind so short
 As hindereth the passage of my speech.
 So fierce a qualm yet ne'er assailed me.
 ARDEN. Come, Master Franklin, let us go on softly.
 The annoyance of the dust or else some meat
 You ate at dinner cannot brook with you.
 I have been often so and soon amended.
 FRANKLIN. Do you remember where my tale did leave?
 ARDEN. Ay, where the gentleman did check his wife.
 FRANKLIN. She being reprehended for the fact,
 Witness produced that took her with the deed,
 Her glove brought in which there she left behind,
 And many other assured arguments,
 Her husband asked her whether it were not or so.
 ARDEN. Her answer then? I wonder how she looked,
 Having forsworn it with such vehement oaths,
 And at the instant so approved upon her.
 FRANKLIN. First did she cast her eyes down to the earth,
 Watching the drops that fell amain from thence;
 Then softly draws she forth her handkercher,
 And modestly she wipes her tear-stained face;
 Then hemmed she out, to clear her voice should seem,
 And with a majesty addressed herself
 To encounter all their accusations. —
 Pardon me, Master Arden, I can no more;
 This fighting at my heart makes short my wind.
 ARDEN. Come, we are almost now at Rainham Down.
 Your pretty tale beguiles the weary way;
 I would you were in state to tell it out. (9. 62–93)³⁴

Franklin recounts a tale to pass the time but is physically unable to complete it. Because Franklin interrupts the narrative we are caught between what might be thought of as generic possibilities: is this a story of 'the false woman' or 'the

³⁴ Compare a similar displacement effect in *Sapientia Solomonis*, where Solomon rejects the suggestion that judicial torture form part of the trial process. The Vice figure, Marcolph, is later subjected to 'tortures' that are comically enacted in a tooth-pulling scene as part of the subplot: *Sapientia Solomonis Acted before the Queen by the Boys of Westminster School January 17, 1565/6*, ed. by Elizabeth Rogers Payne (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1938), III. 5, v. 2.

woman falsely accused'?³⁵ In general terms, the scene is an exemplary instance of the difficulties that circumstantial evidence presents to the interpreter.

At an ostensibly 'fictive' level, scene 9 rehearses a further instance of the problem that confronts Franklin and Arden in their 'real' dealings with Alice and Mosby. In scene 8, for example, Alice's criticism of Arden turns on his interpretation of 'a worthless kiss and joining arms [...] done but merrily to try they patience' (8. 94–95):

ALICE. Ah, Arden, what folly blinded thee?
 Ah, jealous harebrained man what hast thou done?
 When we, to welcome thee, intended sport,
 Came lovingly to meet thee on thy way,
 Thou drew'st thy sword, enraged with jealousy,
 And hurt thy friend whose thoughts were free from harm;
 All for a worthless kiss and joining arms,
 Both done but merrily to try thy patience.
 And me unhappy that devised the jest,
 Which, though begun in sport, yet ends in blood! (8. 88–97)

Alice enumerates the circumstances that should have led Arden to see her particular behaviour in a positive light. Then she lists the ways in which Arden has misinterpreted her more generally:

If I be merry, thou straightways thinks me light;
 If sad, thou sayest the sullens trouble me;
 If well attired, thou thinks I will be gadding;
 If homely, I seem sluttish in thine eye.
 Thus am I still, and shall be while I die,
 Poor wench abused by thy misgovernment.
 ARDEN. But is it for truth that neither thou nor he
 Intendedst malice in your misdemeanour? (8. 108–15)

³⁵ Well-known Shakespearean instances occur in *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Othello*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Cymbeline*. See also Lorna Hutson, *The Invention of Suspicion: Law and Mimesis in Shakespeare and Renaissance Drama* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Subha Mukherji, *Law and Representation in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Katharine Eisaman Maus, 'Proof and Consequences: Inwardness and its Exposure in the English Renaissance', *Representations*, 34 (1991), 29–52; and Valerie Wayne, 'The Woman's Part of *Cymbeline*', in *Staged Properties in Early Modern English Drama*, ed. by Jonathan Gil Harris and Natasha Korda (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 288–315. McAdam reads this scene rather differently: he assumes that the woman is adulterous, and suggests that '[t]he adulterous woman thus becomes a mirror image of Franklin himself, who unconsciously seems to share her anxiety' ('Protestant Manliness', p. 57).

Arden's eventual willingness to put the best possible interpretation on the 'points that ingender suspicion' is in contrast to his reported behaviour earlier in the play. In scene 4, Franklin tells us that

Sometimes [Arden] seeketh to beguile his grief,
And tells a story with his careful tongue;
Then comes his wife's dishonour in his thoughts
And in the middle cutteth off his tale,
Pouring fresh sorrow on his weary limbs.
So woe-begone, so inly charged with woe,
Was never any lived and bare it so. (4. 48–54)

Clearly prefiguring scene 9, this 'interrupted-narrative effect' reinforces the sense in which Arden and Franklin are in effect doubles. Arden's bodily experience of psychological pain (scene 4) is recapitulated by Franklin's 'qualm' of the heart (scene 9).

Arden's repeated willingness to see the best in Alice and to believe that she is loyal to him contradicts the *Chronicle's* moralistic analysis in which it is claimed that Arden permits adultery under his own roof.³⁶ Arden's repentant 'nice mindedness' also distinguishes him from other dramatic characters in the annals of early modern drama who remain preposterously committed to a fixed and erroneous interpretation based on circumstantial evidence.³⁷ Arden's interpretative wavering is a correlative of the doubtfulness of such 'arguments': the self-same arguments or 'indications' may be deployed to mount the contrary case. By mirroring and doubling Arden and Franklin, the play separates out the rhetorical and legalistic uses of circumstantial evidence and modes of conjecture. In doing so it registers the long history of disparagement of circumstantial evidence and its association with falsehood and unreliability. Rhetorical falsehood and unreliability are attached to Alice.³⁸ This effectively quarantines the activity of detection based primarily on

³⁶ See *Arden*, ed. by Wine, p. 149 and marginal note drawing attention to his behaviour. In Holinshed, Arden is a 'wittol'.

³⁷ See, for example, the discussions in Joel B. Altman, "Preposterous Conclusions": Eros, Enargeia, and the Composition of *Othello*, *Representations*, 18 (1987), 129–57; James A. Knapp, "Ocular Proof": Archival Revelations and Aesthetic Response, *Poetics Today*, 24 (2003), 695–727; and Martha Ronk, 'Desdemona's Self-Presentation', *English Literary Renaissance*, 35 (2005), 52–72.

³⁸ Compare *Arden*, ed. by Wine, pp. 492–505. Alice invents a private life for herself in which Arden is a domestic tyrant.

objects, or 'things seen',³⁹ from the 'anxiety effect' occasioned by the treatment of circumstantial evidence in earlier scenes.

In the play's conservative understanding of property relations, Alice's wilfulness presents Arden with a problem of 'management', most obviously because in his absence she may be 'used' improperly. Scene 9, where interpretive anxieties are literally registered on the body, should alert us to the possibility that the play raises concerns about certain kinds of rhetorical arguments and certain kinds of property relations by casting 'woman' as the problem. The (fictional) glove mentioned in scene 9 is conventionally understood to be sexually symbolic: the glove stands in for the nameless woman at the scene of an alleged crime.⁴⁰ Confronted with this 'sign' of herself, the woman must answer her detractors. Woman is shown to be *like* circumstantial evidence: easily turned, endlessly interpretable, never 'complete'.⁴¹

Having explored the play's representations of circumstantial evidence, I want to raise a larger, methodological concern: what might the study of Elizabethan drama contribute to our understanding of attitudes to evidence, before any 'law of

³⁹ Broader cultural concerns around 'things seen' and 'things unseen' may be found in, for example, Alexander Welsh, 'The Evidence of Things Not Seen: Justice Stephen and Bishop Butler', *Representations*, 22 (1988), 60–88; Welsh, 'Burke and Bentham on the Narrative Potential of Circumstantial Evidence', *New Literary History*, 21 (1990), 607–27; Welsh, *Strong Representations: Narrative and Circumstantial Evidence in England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992); Barbara Shapiro, *Probability and Certainty in Seventeenth Century England: A Study of the Relationships Between Natural Science, Religion, History, Law, and Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983); and Shapiro, *A Culture of Fact: England, 1550–1720* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000).

⁴⁰ See Peter Stallybrass and Ann Rosalind Jones, 'Fetishizing the Glove in Renaissance Europe', *Critical Inquiry*, 28 (2001), 114–32.

⁴¹ *The Wardmote Book of Faversham* (fols 59, 60) tells us that Alice's 'apparel' was 'taken seised and forfeited to th' use of the said Town' (*Arden*, ed. by Wine, p. 162). Compare the evidence for gang rape as a punishment in 'Alice Arden's rapes' (Orlin, *Private Matters and Public Culture*). Note too that the evidence of 'things' has shifted when we compare Holinshed and the play: the discovery of Arden's purse and girdle on Mosby's bed in the play should be contrasted with the *Chronicle* in which Arden's blood is noted on Mosby's own hose and purse (*Arden*, ed. by Wine, p. 158). This shiftiness of circumstantial evidence reinforces the idea of property and 'theft' or improper use. 'Inartificial proofs' and 'circumstantial evidence' are regarded as 'incomplete', needing other proofs or arguments to supplement them. I draw an obvious analogy with the theoretical model of 'woman as lack'. The evidentiary status of 'things' on the early modern stage is central to the new materialist historicism. See, for example, Douglas Bruster, 'The Dramatic Life of Objects in the Early Modern Theatre', in *Staged Properties in Early Modern English Drama*, ed. by Harris and Korda, pp. 67–96.

evidence' existed?⁴² It is a legal-historical commonplace that the law of evidence is wholly undeveloped prior to the eighteenth century. Unfortunately, the archive is extremely thin for the scholar attempting to reconstruct pretrial processes. The recourse to non-legal texts such as plays, pamphlets, handbooks, and conduct literature is not without its difficulties. In *Prosecuting Crime in the Renaissance*, for example, John Langbein draws on Jacobean chapbooks to reconstruct the conduct of pretrial examination by Justices of the Peace. In the absence of 'conventional law reports', he writes, 'another variety of narrative evidence has come down to us that depicts the JPs in their role as investigator'.⁴³ His methodological assumptions might give us pause: 'The most useful for present purposes of the chap-book cases is among the least credible [Dell's Case (1606)].'

There has been considerable exaggeration (if indeed the whole tale is not an outright fabrication). However, in our context a hypothetical magistrate's investigation is nearly as good as a real one, since the hypothetical still typifies the prosecutorial practice at the time as the author understood it.⁴⁴

Rather than assume that such representations must ultimately divulge what the author understood, I propose to leave open the question of what the variety of narrative evidence reveals or can be said to 'understand'.⁴⁵ Nor have I assumed, in the case of *Arden of Faversham*, that what I call the play's 'dramatic logic' equates directly with what New Historicist analogizing might call early modern 'cultural logic'.⁴⁶ In particular, I wish to entertain the possibility that the play's truth-effects derive from the intersection of present expectations, in other words anachronistic back-projection as well as generic experimentation.⁴⁷ The play's representation of legal

⁴² See e.g. James Sharp, 'The People and the Law', in *Popular Culture in Seventeenth Century England*, ed. by Barry Reay (London: Routledge, 1988), pp. 244–70.

⁴³ Langbein, *Prosecuting Crime*, p. 45.

⁴⁴ Langbein, *Prosecuting Crime*, p. 48.

⁴⁵ Langbein has been accused of too sanguine a view of his sources: 'we have only the beginning of an understanding, especially as Dr Langbein is apt to take the words of the statutes as describing actual practice'. See G. R. Elton, 'Introduction: Crime and the Historian', in *Crime in England 1550–1800*, ed. by J. S. Cockburn (London: Methuen, 1977), pp. 1–14 (p. 8).

⁴⁶ Compare Christopher Prendergast, 'Circulating Representations: New Historicism and the Poetics of Culture', *SubStance*, 88 (1999), 90–104: 'How the generic and structural temporalities of dramatic thinking relate to the conditions of a wider history is exactly the task in hand. To short-circuit that inquiry to a crude reduction of texts to symptomatic ideology is a travesty of anything that New Historicism might productively be' (p. 90).

⁴⁷ James Forse, 'Arden of Faversham and Romeo and Juliet: Two Elizabethan Experiments in the Genre of "Comedy-Suspense"', *Journal of Popular Culture*, 29 (1995), 85–102. Some

process may be wishful thinking as much as actual practice; to rephrase Langbein, 'the hypothetical detection is better than a real one'. This is to bring into play the methodological projections of our current reading practices, as critics of New Historicism and its cognates have long recognized. I suspect this is particularly the case when we consider the evidence for 'cultural anxiety' that appears to characterize the object of my inquiry.⁴⁸ We could project onto the play a series of homologies between absentee landlords/husbands and, for example, the problems that beset early modern policing in an increasingly complex social setting; just as the master is not necessarily at home, the jury is no longer assumed to be self-informing.⁴⁹ The dramatic logic of *Arden of Faversham* assigns to Arden, the nouveau riche absentee landlord, a range of negative attributes: disputatious neighbours, unruly servants, an adulterous wife, and a psychology characterized by 'hermeneutic anxiety'. The play assigns to his friend Franklin, an apparently established absentee landlord, the role of positive foil or mirror double to Arden: well-connected and hospitable, if not quite 'landed gentry', maintaining a comfortable household, and diligently fulfilling his civic obligations with 'hermeneutic confidence'.⁵⁰ In the figure of

Modernist detective fiction, for example, assigns an exceptional intellect to the detective. More recently, forensic science as a specialized technical skill set has replaced lonely ratiocination. The ideological work of such fictions has been widely discussed: see e.g. Stephen Knight, *Crime Fiction, 1800–2000: Detection, Death, Diversity* (New York: Palgrave, 2003).

⁴⁸ See e.g. Shepherd, 'Anxious Patriarchs' for 'anxious masculinity' as an effect of methodological interests and particular archives; cf. Mark Breitenberg, 'Anxious Masculinities: Sexual Jealousy in Early Modern England', *Feminist Studies*, 19 (1993), 377–98; Breitenberg, *Anxious Masculinity in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). Prendergast, 'Circulating Representations', among many other critics of New Historicism, offers a critique of the antifoundational model of discursive interconnectedness (p. 97) and the 'methodologically weak' relation of analogy, sometimes called homology, that characterize claims for evidence of an early modern 'cultural logic' (p. 100).

⁴⁹ John Marshall Mitnick, 'From Neighbour-Witness to Judge of Proofs: The Transformation of the English Civil Juror', *American Journal of Legal History*, 32 (1988), 201–35.

⁵⁰ Conviviality, hospitality, and social reciprocities are thematically evident in the play, but I have not chosen to develop this in the current essay. See e.g. Judith M. Bennett, 'Conviviality and Charity in Early Modern England', *Past and Present*, 134 (1992), 19–41; Steve Hindle, 'Dearth, Fasting and Alms: The Campaign for General Hospitality in Late Elizabethan England', *Past and Present*, 172 (2001), 44–86, for scholarship concerned with the interconnectedness of public and private life, absentee landlords, and maintenance of the common peace I have associated with Arden and Franklin. For the 'dramatic logic' of the dining table, see e.g. Catherine Richardson, 'Properties of Domestic Life: The Table in Heywood's *A Woman Killed With Kindness*', in *Staged Properties in Early Modern English Drama*, ed. by Harris and Korda, pp. 129–52; see also Sullivan, 'Arden of Faversham'.

Franklin, the play offers a reassuring representation of the effective participation in complex, intersecting social systems (land and law). Franklin's civic obligations in the legal sphere are a correlative of his status as a landholder.⁵¹ In Franklin, the play portrays the ideal reader addressed both by the handbooks of rhetoric and the 'justicing manuals' upon which it appears to draw. *Arden of Faversham*, and the drama more generally, is in effect another site on which it is possible to see the early modern refunctioning of previously disparaged ancient techniques, what Shapiro calls 'institutional migration'. But the dramatic logic of the play suggests the possibility that *Arden of Faversham* offers its audience less of a 'how to' and more of a 'what if' scenario: Franklin is, in other words, the *ideal* detective.

I want to conclude by suggesting that attention to the dramatic logic of property relations, and their intersection with rhetoric and legal process in *Arden of Faversham*, opens onto a further question of genre, in this case the critical traditions that have disparaged the subgenre of domestic tragedy for its insistent 'realism'. Generally speaking, there is a negative critical valuation placed on plays concerned with the domestic, mundane, and realistic materiality of life. To this we might add the dismissal of plays that are overtly didactic and moralizing. *Arden of Faversham* is an obvious candidate for such evaluation. Recent materialist critical revaluations of properties on the early modern stage offer a further perspective on the negative valuation of the experimental genre of domestic tragedy to which *Arden of Faversham* belongs. The play's insistence on resorting to 'lifeless things' by which to achieve the 'recognition' or 'discovery' of the crime taps into an Aristotelian prejudice against such techniques: 'for indeed recognition may take place in this manner through lifeless things or chance events, and one may recognize whether someone has or has not done something'.⁵² In this critical tradition, bad art results from discovery scenes that rely on 'a broken ring, or a handkircher', or

⁵¹ See the discussion of Franklin's social position in Michael Neill, "'This Gentle Gentleman'": Social Change and the Language of Status in *Arden of Faversham*', in *Putting History to the Question: Power, Politics, and Society in English Renaissance Drama* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), pp. 49–72 (p. 58). Land and social ambitions are central to Frank Whigham's study of *Arden* in *Seizures of the Will in Early Modern English Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 63–120. Neill sees the denouement as 'ambiguous' and the restoration of order entrusted to the 'eminently bourgeois and anonymous figure of the mayor', rather than Lord Cheyny, the ostensible 'Master' to whom all owe deference in the play (p. 67). The mayor is Franklin's equivalent.

⁵² Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1452a 34–37. Cited in Bruster, 'Dramatic Life of Objects', p. 67. See also the illuminating essays in *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture*, ed. by Margreta de Grazia, Maureen Quilligan, and Peter Stallybrass (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

the use of a so-called Crito figure who arrives in time to gather 'the true understanding of circumstances'.⁵³ The use of such 'arguments' to resolve a plot is more usual in comedy or romance. Its deployment in a tragedy is therefore notable. Franklin is much more than a choric figure in *The Tragedy of Master Arden of Faversham*. In generic terms, Franklin doubles as a comedic Crito figure that speedily wraps up the plot, refunctioning an 'impertinent' technique that has migrated from the 'lower' genres, helping to develop the hybrid form called domestic tragedy. He provides the reassurance proper to comedy (understood as 'that which ends well'). The effect of 'documentary realism', a domestic setting, and the resort to 'inartistic proofs' (or circumstantial evidence) contribute to the generic mixing that is itself a function of the play's ideological labours.⁵⁴

The dramatic logic of this play requires that something of the idealism proper to the tragic mode be reasserted. We find this in the references to God's Law, especially in the play's dwelling on the repentance of Alice in scene 18. Just as the comedic is finally incorporated into and subordinated to the tragic mode, common law is properly a subset of Divine Law.⁵⁵ The play makes sure that mundane probabilities are subordinated to metaphysical certainties. In accord with the play's representation of alleged 'cultural anxieties' over the interpenetration of the private and public spheres, it is also logically consistent that Franklin, as a private citizen whose interpretive skills and 'practical logic' are required in legal process, should solve the crime in the service of the common peace.⁵⁶ Franklin's function is to

⁵³ Bruster, 'Dramatic Life of Objects', p. 67. For the employment of 'inartificial' or 'inartistic proof' in comedy, see e.g. Joel B. Altman, *The Tudor Play of Mind: Rhetorical Inquiry and the Development of Elizabethan Drama* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978); Madeleine Doran, *Endeavours of Art: A Study of Form in Elizabethan Drama* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1954); Marvin T. Herrick, *Comic Theory in the Sixteenth Century* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1950); Edwin W. Robbins, *Dramatic Characterisation in Printed Commentaries on Terence 1473–1600*, Illinois Studies in Language and Literature, 35 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1951); Kathy Eden, *Poetic and Legal Fiction in the Aristotelian Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986); and Terence Cave, *Recognitions: A Study in Poetics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 28–54.

⁵⁴ On genre experimentation, cf. Forse, 'Arden of Faversham and Romeo and Juliet'. On the Crito figure as legal officer, see J. Wilson McCuthan, 'Justice and Equity in the English Morality Play', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 19 (1958), 405–10; and Kerr, 'Thomas Garter's Susanna'.

⁵⁵ See Paul Griffiths, 'Review of Malcolm Gaskill, *Crime and Mentalities in Early Modern England*, Cambridge: CUP, 2000', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 32 (2001), 1138–40, on apparent shifts away from such conceptualizations in the context of legal argument.

⁵⁶ Discussed in Shapiro, 'Beyond Reasonable Doubt', pp. 69–70. On the common peace: 'The private individual was the most important law-enforcing office in the community. Public obligation

navigate the troubled intersections between private and public, rhetoric and law, 'things' and 'ideas', comedy and tragedy. Franklin's dramatic role, the 'realistic' representation of his local civic activism, is made possible by the larger cultural refunctioning and migration of techniques into new discursive sets. The wealthier propertied class, perhaps managing their estates 'at arm's length' from London, are obliged to maintain the common peace despite being 'at arm's length' from their local constituencies. The rhetorical techniques to which I have drawn attention are a point of intersection between law and literature. Both the handbooks and the hybrid form of domestic tragedy represent the 'low-status' but effective techniques increasingly required to understand and make sense of new complexities. If Arden represents the negative aspect of this complex social setting, Franklin represents a kind of optimistic faith in the idealized 'solution' to it. Franklin is a significant dramatic representation by which *Arden of Faversham* can 'participate in the construction of [its] culture's ideology'.⁵⁷

intruded on private life repeatedly. Residents drifted easily between official and private status. At no point in the early stages of accusation did private individuals or public officials completely control the legal process. Private initiative dovetailed with the powers allotted to public officials. [...] The number of persons involved reinforced the dispersion of authority, although it also frustrated any attempt to systematize the process. The courtroom stood at the end, not the beginning, of a complex chain of private and public actions. Each actor retained the power to play his part as he saw fit. Each inspired by his own desires but also constrained by the behaviour of every other actor' (Herrup, *The Common Peace*, p. 92).

⁵⁷ Orlin, *Private Matters and Public Culture*, p. 13.

EDWARD II AND THE RHETORICIANS OF MYTH

Clayton G. MacKenzie

At the opening of *Edward II*, Gaveston enters reading — more accurately, rereading — a letter that has been sent to him by the King. His spirits are filled with a ‘surfeit of delight’ (I. 1. 3) because the King has urged him to return to the English court.¹ ‘What greater bliss’ (I. 1. 4), Gaveston asks, can befall him? He compares his arrival in London to that of a soul achieving paradise itself:

The sight of London to my exiled eyes
Is as Elysium to a new-come soul — (I. 1. 10–11)

Paradise was an evocative concept to the Elizabethans. Adventurers thought they had found their own visions of Elysium in lands as geographically diverse as Bermuda, Newfoundland, and the Low Countries.² These, if you like, were modern paradises — economic encomiums of opportunity and wealth. An English

¹ Many critics have made connections between *Edward II* and *Richard II*, among them Maurice Charney who concludes that ‘Marlowe’s *Edward II* serves as a model rather than a source for Shakespeare’s *Richard II*’. See his ‘Marlowe’s *Edward II* as Model for Shakespeare’s *Richard II*’, *Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama*, 33 (1994), 31–41 (p. 40). All references to Marlowe’s plays are taken from Christopher Marlowe, *Complete Plays*, ed. by Mark Thornton Burnett (London: Everyman, 1999). Quotations from Shakespeare’s works are taken from *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. by G. Blakemore Evans, 2nd edn (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997).

² In *A Plaine Description of the Barmvdas* (London, 1613; STC 14817), Silvester Jourdan calls Bermuda ‘one of the sweetest Paradises that be vpon the earth’ (A3^v). Captain Bingham, in his prefatory poem to George Peckham’s *A True Report, Of the Late Discoueries, and Possession, Taken in the Right of the Crowne of Englande, of the New-found Landes* (London, 1583; STC 19523), describes Newfoundland as ‘The paradise, of all the world’ (p. 10). In his *A Tragicall Historie of the Troubles and Ciuile Warres of the Lowe Countries, Otherwise called Flanders* (London, 1583; STC 17450.3), Thomas Stocker calls the Low Countries ‘the Paragone, or rather, yearthly Paradise, of all the Countries in Europe’ (A2^v).

tradition of cartography, going back to medieval times, had sought the location of a different kind of paradise — the original paradise described, variously, as the Fortunate Isles, the Hesperides, the Islands of the Blessed, the earthly Elysium, Ogygia, the Garden of Eden.³ This archetypal ‘paradise’ — the word itself probably deriving from the old Persian ‘pairidaeza’ which signified a walled enclosure — had allowed an English world mired in civil war to dream of a place and a perfection that was beyond their present reach but, apparently, not beyond their ken.⁴ Through all the best authority of scientific measurement and sober reasoning, and to no-one’s real surprise, the English cartographers deduced that England was itself the original location of paradise. When Joshua Sylvester in his translation of *Du Bartas* writes of England as ‘The Worlds rich Garden, Earths rare Paradise’, his superlative is neither arbitrary nor accidental, for he draws on a long-established tradition that equated England and Eden.⁵

In sixteenth-century English thinking, the idea of the English paradise was underpinned by three clear principles: regenerating monarchical greatness; the rejection of war on English soil; and the imperative of glorious military conquest abroad. These ingredients inform John of Gaunt’s English panegyric in the second act of *Richard II* where he describes England as ‘this other Eden, demi-paradise’ (II. 1. 42) — ‘demi’ in the sense of second rather than half. The defining characteristics of his paradise are a line of royal kings ‘famous by their birth’ (II. 1. 52) and

³ In ‘Britain Among the Fortunate Isles’, *Studies in Philology*, 53 (1956), 114–40, Josephine Waters Bennett has traced the origins of the legend of Britain as an isolated island paradise, separated from the rest of the world, and argued for ‘a more nebulous and vague association of Britain with the mythical islands of the Western Ocean, such as Thule, the Fortunate Isles, or Hesperides, the Islands of the Blest, and Homer’s Ogygia’ (p. 117). Equations of England/Britain and Eden abound in late sixteenth-century English letters. Thomas Stocker frames his praise of England in biblical terms when he writes ‘For, where can wee read either in the olde Testament, or yet in any other prophane Historie, that euer GOD, dealte more bountifully, with any Nation then with us [i.e. the English], either for thynges needefull and necessarie, or delightfull and pleasaunt for this life. So that it maie verie well be saied of us, that we enioye a lande, flowing with Milke and Honie’ (A2’). Robert Greene anticipates John of Gaunt’s second-Eden motif in *The Spanish Masquerado* (London, 1589; STC 12309), ‘Seeing then we are euery way blest and fauoured from aboue: that the Lord our mercifull God maketh England like Eden, a second paradise: let us fear to offend him’ (unpaginated).

⁴ John Wilders, in *The Lost Garden: A View of Shakespeare’s English and Roman Plays* (London: Macmillan, 1978), relates the gardens in Shakespeare’s history plays to Eden and suggests that the ‘old Persian word pairidaeza, from which the English word “paradise” is derived, signified a walled garden, park, or orchard’ (p. 133).

⁵ *Du Bartas: His Diuine Weekes and Workes*, trans. by Joshua Sylvester (London, 1605; STC 21649), p. 462.

a chivalric history of military deeds that have been perpetrated 'far from home' (II. 1. 53). But more than that, idyllic England is a safe place, its surrounding sea serving 'in the office of a wall' (II. 1. 47) to keep out 'the hand of war' (II. 1. 44). In essence, Gaunt's England is a land of magnificent royal lineage 'wont to conquer others' (II. 1. 65) rather than itself, at once celebrating foreign triumphs and repudiating internal strife or foreign intrusion.

The bed of history cultivated by Marlowe in the writing of *Edward II* does not seem to be fertile ground for the representation of an English paradise. It depicts a particularly vicious phase of civil war, hallmarked by appallingly weak monarchy, and multiple foreign incursions into English territory. What it does have, though, is a young prince, the son of Edward II, who would emerge as one of England's royal exemplars. Edward III's reputation was unsurpassed in the Elizabethan imagination. Tudor historians lauded his exploits abroad with unfailing enthusiasm, ranging from John Rastell's populist *The Pastyme of the People* to Caxton's weightier *Chronycles of Englande*.⁶ A plethora of Elizabethan works on military prowess and skills made standard reference to Edward III as the primal illustration of the heroic militaristic traits they advocated — he is lauded as 'Princely Edward mirror of Cheualrie' in William Wyrley's *The Trve Vse of Armorie* and praised similarly in Matthew Sutcliffe's *The Practice, Proceedings, And Lawes of Armes*.⁷ In addition, Edward III's kingship marked an extraordinary period of domestic peace and economic progress. His reign was in every sense the legitimate precursor to the paradise that English men and women felt they enjoyed in the Golden Age of Elizabeth I's reign.

Marlowe's play addresses the seminal descriptors of the English paradise, demonstrating how Edward II and the time in which he lived fell so regrettably short of paradisaical expectations. In so doing, Marlowe invests into a succession of different characters the rhetoric of the English mythology, allowing each to presume, briefly, the mantle of mythographer before demolishing his or her pretensions and aspirations. It will be argued in this essay that the passing parade of bogus mythologizers, imbued with the rhetoric but not the true spirit and substance of the English mythology, is set up as a deliberate foil to the emergence of the true English mythologizer, Edward III, at the end of the play.

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⁶ John Rastell, *The Pastyme of People* (London, 1530; STC 20724), C5^r–D3^r; William Caxton, *Chronycles of Englande* (St Albans, 1483; STC 9995).

⁷ William Wyrley, *The Trve Vse of Armorie* (London, 1592; STC 26062), p. 81; Matthew Sutcliffe, *The Practice, Proceedings, And Lawes of Armes* (London, 1593; STC 23468), B3^r.

When Gaveston finds in the sight of London a vision of Elysium, his words would have conjured familiar resonances in the minds of his Elizabethan audience. John Michael Archer draws an explicit connection between the reference to 'Elysium' and the court of Elizabeth I, suggesting that Marlowe 'criticizes its [the court's] compulsory heterosociality by imagining a male monarch, courted by male suitors, and threatened by over-mighty male subjects'.⁸ Certainly, Marlowe's audience would have detected the familiar resonances of Eliza and Elysium, but whether at this stage in the play they would have unpicked the clues to a political commentary is doubtful. Similarly, Dympna Callaghan's assertion that 'there is an undeniable resemblance between Edward and Elizabeth's sovereignty' needs to be treated with some caution.⁹ Dennis Kay seems to offer safer ground when he proposes that 'in Marlowe's play the image of the king may be construed as a negative exemplum, being defined negatively in terms of the well established cult of Queen Elizabeth'.¹⁰ Gaveston may conjure an image of Elysium, but the nature of the speaker and the context of his observations would quickly have struck discordant notes with his audience. Gaveston hails from France, not England, and the silver sea that walled out Albion's foes had served most actively in keeping the French at bay. No sooner has he uttered the idea of Elysium than a devaluing shadow settles on his words:

The sight of London to my exiled eyes
Is as Elysium to a new-come soul —
Not that I love the city or the men
But that it harbours him I hold so dear,
The King, upon whose bosom let me die. (1. 1. 10–14)

Gaveston's paradise is attached to a person (the King) and not to the place or its population ('Not that I love the city or the men'). This qualification, dismissive as it is of the life of the city and its people, crucially degrades two of the stock notions that defined England's paradisaical qualities. Firstly, England styled itself as the inheritor of Troy's excellence, tracing its origins to the Trojan Brutus (from whose name, legend had it, 'Britain' derived). London, as the metropole of this new civilization, had been commonly referred to as Troynovant ('New Troy') at least

⁸ John Michael Archer, *Sovereignty and Intelligence: Spying and Court Culture in the English Renaissance* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), p. 77.

⁹ Dympna Callaghan, 'The Terms of Gender: "Gay" and "Feminist" Edward II', in *Feminist Readings of Early Modern Culture: Emerging Subjects*, ed. by Valerie Traub, M. Lindsay Kaplan, and Dympna Callaghan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 275–301 (p. 283).

¹⁰ Dennis Kay, 'Marlowe, Edward II, and the Cult of Elizabeth', *Early Modern Literary Studies*, 3 (1997), 1–30 (p. 3).

from the thirteenth century, and most authoritatively in Caxton's *Chronycles of Englande* (B4^{r-v}). Gaveston's inferred denigration of 'the city' verges on mythical heresy. Secondly, the slur he casts on its inhabitants serves only to compound the insult. A land of great monarchs, true, but one built inexorably on the industry and courage of its subjects. The English paradise depended fundamentally on cooperation and internal peace between and within all social levels. Thomas Lodge, in *The Wounds of Civil War*, offers a salutary lesson on the need for universal social concord: 'Brute beasts nill break the mutual law of love, | And birds affection will not violate; | The senseless trees have concord 'mongst themselves, | And stones agree in links of amity.'¹¹ Without a land of harmonious subjects, there can be no peace — and peace was the essence of the English Elysium. Hal's cloaked foray among his common soldiers on the eve of Agincourt in *Henry V* epitomized the tacit English communion between those who lead and those who are led. Albion's rare paradise could not be separated from the peoples who inhabited it, whatever their social standing or economic status.

As Gaveston elaborates on his notion of paradise on earth, it seems that the common people have no real part to play in his myth except as actors in a fantastical reverie:

Like sylvan nymphs my pages shall be clad;
My men, like satyrs grazing on the lawns,
Shall with their goat-feet dance an antic hay.
Sometime a lovely boy in Dian's shape [...]
Shall bathe him in a spring; and there, hard by,
One like Actaeon, peeping through the grove,
Shall by the angry goddess be transformed. (i. 1. 57–60, 65–67)

There are many reasons why a period audience might have found this speech uncomfortable, and rightly, it has drawn sustained critical attention. David Bevington and James Shapiro have noted that Gaveston's 'Italianate spectacle includes homoerotic fantasies of a "lovelie boye in Dians shape"'.¹² Lawrence Normand has drawn intriguing parallels between this scene and the sodomistic murder of Edward, suggesting that these two 'utterly opposed versions of male same-sex eroticism frame

¹¹ Thomas Lodge, *The Wounds of Civil War*, ed. by Joseph W. Houppert (London: Edward Arnold, 1969), i. 1. 260–63.

¹² David Bevington and James Shapiro, "What are Kings, When regiment is Gone?" The Decay of Ceremony in *Edward II*, in *'A Poet and a Filthy Play-Maker': New Essays on Christopher Marlowe*, ed. by Kenneth Friedenreich, Roma Gill, and Constance B. Kuriyama (New York: AMS Press, 1988), pp. 263–78 (p. 266).

the action of the play'.¹³ François Laroque has argued that 'Actaeon's dogs represent servants turning on their master' — an interpretation that may have served 'to adumbrate the barons' rebellion against their king'.¹⁴

Gaveston's sense of paradisaical life in the English court is classically mythological but it is irreconcilable, even antithetical, to the sentiments of the national mythology that was so firmly rooted in the Elizabethan psyche. The lip-service to paradise is there, but the philosophical construct runs all awry. If we are looking for statements redolent with a sense of English paradise, then it quickly becomes apparent that Gaveston is a bogus mythologizer whose image of paradise is far removed from the anglicized heroic ideal. His paradise is Arcadian, indulgent, personalized, private. And more than this, it is potentially destructive. William B. Kelly, though stopping short of labelling Gaveston as Machiavellian, has demonstrated how the 'sylvan nymphs' speech may even challenge virtue in its broader sense: 'The relish Gaveston displays as he details both his role in directing his men about their antics and the choreography itself is reminiscent of the delight in misdeeds associated with the morality play Vice figure.'¹⁵

In the second scene of the play, another mythographer emerges, one who seems far more in tune with the precepts of the idyllic English mythology. Aggrieved at the return of Gaveston, a group of nobleman discuss with the Archbishop of Canterbury and Queen Isabella (Edward II's estranged wife) a possible course of action:

CANTERBURY. But yet lift not your swords against the King.
 LANCASTER. No, but we'll lift Gaveston from hence.
 WARWICK. And war must be the means, or he'll stay still.
 ISABELLA. Then let him stay; for, rather than my lord
 Shall be oppressed by civil mutinies,
 I will endure a melancholy life,
 And let him frolic with his minion. (I. 2. 61–67)

Canterbury raises no objection to civil war and asks only that the King should not be harmed; Lancaster promises force of arms to dislodge Gaveston; Warwick

¹³ Lawrence Normand, "What Passions Call You These?" Edward II and James VI', in *Christopher Marlowe and English Renaissance Culture*, ed. by Darryll Grantley and Peter Roberts (Aldershot: Scolar, 1996), pp. 172–95 (p. 188).

¹⁴ François Laroque, 'Ovidian V(o)ices in Marlowe and Shakespeare: The Actaeon Variations', in *Shakespeare's Ovid: The Metamorphoses in the Plays and Poems*, ed. by A. B. Taylor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 165–77 (p. 169).

¹⁵ William B. Kelly, 'Mapping Subjects in Marlowe's *Edward II*', *South Atlantic Review*, 63 (1998), 1–19 (p. 10).

thinks of civil war as an imperative. Only Queen Isabella puts forward a contrary view, rejecting civil war utterly and proposing the sacrifice of her personal happiness for the good of the country. Her message is simple and unequivocal: leave things as they are because peace must be maintained at any price. We could speculate, as some have done, that this is mere posturing — that she understands full well the inevitability of civil war and that her words are cheap — but, at face value, she affirms the virtue of peace at home, and few in a period audience accustomed to theatrical and literary rejections of internal turmoil would have disagreed.

The Elizabethan concern with civil strife was obsessive, and a litany of sixteenth-century commentary reviles the idea of war on English soil. Among the most celebrated of these was Samuel Daniel's *The Civile Wares betweene the Howses of Lancaster and Yorke* in which the author sets out his stall very clearly in 'The Epistle Dedicatorie': his primary purpose is the need 'to shewe the deformities of ciuile Dissension'.¹⁶ And with good cause. The two hundred years preceding Elizabeth I's ascent to the throne had seen the bloodiest period of English civil history. Geoffrey Whitney, the greatest of the English emblematisers, whose work *A Choice of Emblemes* enjoyed unrivalled popularity in the 1580s, pointedly decries the evils of civil war in a celebrated print titled 'Intestinæ similtates' (Internal dissensions):

When ciuill sworde is drawn out of the sheathe,
And bluddie broiles, at home are set a broache,
Then furious Mars with sworde doth rage beneath,
And to the Toppe, deuowring flames incroache,
None helps to quenche, but rather blowes the flame
And oile doe adde, and powder to the same.

Intestine strife, is fearefull moste of all,
This, makes the Sonne, to cut his fathers throate,
This, parteth frendes, this, brothers makes to bralle,
This, robbes the good, and setts the theeues a floate,
This, Rome did feelee, this, Germanie did taste,
And often times, this noble Lande did waste.¹⁷

The message of the final line is pointed and serious. The Battle of Bosworth Field (1485), the last great battle of the Wars of the Roses, bringing to an end a calamitous century of civil strife, would have been within living memory for a scattering of the early Elizabethans. It was frighteningly proximate.

¹⁶ Samuel Daniel, *The Civile Wares betweene the Howses of Lancaster and Yorke* (London, 1595; STC 6244), A2^r.

¹⁷ Geoffrey Whitney, *A Choice of Emblemes* (Leiden, 1586; STC 25438), p. 7.

In Elizabethan literatures, the curious composite of fighting spirit and peace-loving inclination was commonly characterized as a symbiotic relationship between the Roman god of war, Mars, and the prudent goddess, Pallas. The anglicized cosmology is neatly summed up by Henry Peacham in *Minerva Britannia*:

Though *Mars* defends the kingdome with his might,
And braues abroad his foe, in glorious armes,
Yet wiser *Pallas* guides his arme aright,
And best at home preuentes all future harmes.¹⁸

This unique English deific relationship found currency in a range of popular literatures. Gerard Legh in 1583 writes of the anglicized war-god as Pallas's knight, 'an armed Mars, A champion pollitique in fiede to fight, or at home to defende'.¹⁹ William Wyrley, in *The Trve Vse of Armorie*, quotes a great English soldier as declaring: 'For highly was my knightly seruice deemd, | As well for *Mars* as prudent *Pallas* grace' (p. 135). English mythology claimed Mars as the protective god of England through the Trojan Brutus. On the authority of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Britonum*, looking upon the shores of Britain, Julius Caesar himself had declared that the Romans and the British had a common Trojan origin, and that Brutus had founded Britain, just as Aeneas had founded Rome.²⁰ And the patron deity of Rome was Mars. The role of Pallas in this English equation was clearly a later addendum but, with half an eye to the Queen who ruled them, the Elizabethans clearly felt comfortable with the idea of brute masculinity moderated by feminine wisdom.²¹

¹⁸ Henry Peacham, *Minerva Britannia: Or A Garden of Heroycal Devices* (London, 1612; STC 19511), p. 44.

¹⁹ Gerard Legh, *The Accedens of Armory* (London, 1562; STC 15388), 129^v.

²⁰ Geoffrey of Monmouth, 2: 'Hercle ex eadem prosapia nos Romani et Britones orti sumus, quia ex Trojana gente processimus. Nobis Aeneas post destructionem Trojae primus pater fuit: illis vero Brutus, quem Silvius Ascanii filii Aeneae filius progenuit.' Translation (by A. Thompson): 'In truth we Romans and the Britons have the same origin, since both are descended from the Trojan race. Our first father, after the destruction of Troy, was Aeneas; theirs Brutus, whose father was Sylvius, the son of Ascanius, the son of Aeneas.' References to Geoffrey of Monmouth are taken from *Historia Britonum*, ed. by J. A. Giles (London: D. Nutt, 1844). G. H. Gerould believes that Geoffrey of Monmouth issued his history between 1136 and 1138: 'King Arthur and Politics', *Speculum*, 2 (1927), 33–51 (p. 33).

²¹ That the violence of Mars was harnessed and tutored by Pallas (Minerva to the Romans) had its roots in classical mythology, the idea epitomized in Rubens's painting *Mars Pushed Back by Hercules and Minerva* in which Hercules and Minerva restrain Mars as he attempts to drag Peace (a woman) by the hair. Rubens's painting is housed in the Real Academie de San Fernando, Madrid, Spain. Similarly, a sixteenth-century etching in the New York Metropolitan Museum, after Tintoretto and titled 'Minerva expelling Mars', shows Minerva urging Mars to assuage his violent

So, Peacham's English Mars, tutored by Pallas, kept peace at home; but abroad spurred the English to victory 'in glorious armes.' As she stands urging the martial noblemen against their zealous and bloody intent, Isabella offers the lone and shrill voice of reason. In advising the combative noblemen to pursue domestic peace, Isabella presents herself as a Pallas pleading for calm in the rush to war. That she should champion the civil peace of England might have puzzled Marlowe's audiences for she, too, was French. Yet who could prefer the violent solution proposed by Warwick to an existing peace, marred as it may be by the King's thoughtless and dissolute behaviour? Isabella's position may well pose more of a conundrum for twenty-first-century audiences, accustomed to the public accountability of those who govern, than it did for sixteenth-century audiences whose minds had been so prodigiously scarred by Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles* and other popular histories of the Wars of the Roses.²²

Isabella's advocacy for peace is the right one, and had the King's fondness for Gaveston resulted in merely localized excesses, her view might have prevailed. It is, indeed, part of Marlowe's skill as a dramatist that he is able to position someone like Isabella in a choric, myth-validating role only to reveal within a short time new complexities that test the moral ground upon which characters and audience alike have built their position. Within an act, the localized problem is suddenly internationalized. Lancaster and Mortimer Jr report to the King that England's peace is under foreign assault from four directions:

LANCASTER. Look for rebellion; look to be deposed.

Thy garrisons are beaten out of France,
And lame and poor lie groaning at the gates.
The wild O'Neill, with swarms of Irish kerns,
Lives uncontrolled within the English pale.
Unto the walls of York the Scots made road,
And unresisted drave away rich spoils.

MORTIMER JUNIOR. The haughty Dane commands the narrow seas,
While in the harbour ride thy ships unriggerd. (II. 2. 160–68)

With civil peace at home destroyed by an invading Scottish army and foreign military reputation abroad compromised by the Irish, the French, and the Danes, the English myth espoused by Henry Peacham is disintegrating before our eyes. This fact Isabella laments, wishing that 'mine arms could close this isle about'

intentions, positioning herself protectively between the war god and two female figures, symbolizing Peace and Abundance.

²² Holinshed's *Chronicles* was Marlowe's primary source for *Edward II*; see Maureen Godman, 'Stow's *Summarie*: Source for Marlowe's *Edward II*, *Notes and Queries*, 40 (1993), 160–63.

MORTIMER JUNIOR. Nay, madam, if you be a warrior,
 You must not grow so passionate in speeches. (IV. 4. 4–15)

It is a grave lament, and it reflects the dissolution of her commitment to Edward as her husband and as her divinely appointed king. At least in part the reversal of her position may be attributed to the belief that for the country to be peaceful once more it must now pass inevitably through the maelstrom of civil carnage. Perhaps she is right. Yet, however fluently and sincerely it is couched, this is treason — a fact surely not lost on the young Prince Edward who stands, silent for the moment, by her side.

The dissident noblemen hardly need encouragement in the dash to war. They have already seemed quick, too quick, to draw their swords against English flesh. Among them, Mortimer stands as a vengeful icon — terse, impatient, uncompromisingly brutal. He is certainly reminiscent of the revenger god, Mars Ultor, described in Stephen Batman's *The Golden Booke of the Leaden Goddes*, the sixteenth-century English vulgate of classical lore, who when he 'inuadeth, all things are lefte desolate, & destroyed'.²⁴ He is that Mars whom Bel-Imperia in *The Spanish Tragedy* automatically associates with war: 'where Mars reigneth, there must needs be war'.²⁵ He is a Mars utterly alien to an English landscape, spurred by the bloodthirsty lust for civil carnage and driven not by the anxiety to see his country's wounds healed but by vengeance founded on personal outrage.

Mortimer's Martian impatience is mirrored in the abrupt way he interrupts the Queen's speech, affirming his scant respect for words. This is no time to 'grow so passionate in speeches', he rebukes, when the more pressing need is to 'wreck [...] with the sword' (IV. 4. 22) the unpalatable edifice of Edward's England. Passion should no longer be invested in the refined contemplation of English history or culture or greatness; passion is the dumb elixir of combat, blood, and death. No home-defending and foreign-conquering Mars here but the classical beast, the very antithesis of the English Mars. England is in the grip of an antimythology, and one to which Isabella, who had once stood as the choric defender of the English mythology, has tendered a disturbing fealty.²⁶

²⁴ Stephen Batman, *The Golden Booke of the Leaden Goddes* (London, 1577; STC 1583), 6.

²⁵ Thomas Kyd, *The Spanish Tragedy*, ed. by J. R. Mulryne, in *Elizabethan and Jacobean Tragedies: A New Mermaids Anthology*, introd. by Brian Gibbons (Tonbridge: Ernest Benn, 1984), II. 4. 35.

²⁶ While few Elizabethans could have approved of her actions, there were numerous efforts in the Elizabethan period to analyse her support of the rebellion; see Carol Levin, 'John Foxe and the Responsibilities of Queenship', in *Women in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: Literary and Historical Perspectives*, ed. by Mary Beth Rose (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1986), pp. 13–33.

* * *

The importance of lineage is emphasized from the outset of the play. The thing that seems to irk the English noblemen most is what they see as the unwarranted promotion and patronage of Gaveston by the King. This is evidenced by the deprecatory terms 'base' and 'peasant' so often uttered in the first act to describe the Frenchman; and even the moderate and sanguine Kent baulks at the titular aggrandizement of the King's favourite, arguing:

Brother, the least of these [titles] may well suffice
For one of greater birth than Gaveston. (I. 1. 157–58)

Gaveston cannot slot into the heroic English mythology partly because he is French but also because he lacks the noble pedigree to do so. When the King pleads 'You that be noble born should pity him' (I. 1. 80) he tacitly acknowledges his lover's shortcomings in this regard — and, of course, his own through this somewhat naïve appeal to the compassion of his detractors.²⁷

Ian McAdam thinks the noblemen find Gaveston threatening 'because he presents the barons, despite their refusal to recognize it, with a kind of mirror image, exposing the ungrounded character of sovereign order'.²⁸ This seems to me an apposite observation. The England the noblemen knew and loved relied for its preservation and perpetuation on a chivalric understanding rather than on a written constitution. In fact, even today England still has no written constitution. In the English encomium, it was understood that rank had its privileges but also its obligations, and that dynamic finds restatement by the rebel noblemen with regard to both their own actions and those of the King. This is how young Mortimer articulates his lineal obligation as he plans to attack and conquer the King's castle at Tynemouth:

This tattered ensign of my ancestors,
Which swept the desert shore of that Dead Sea
Whereof we got the name of Mortimer,
Will I advance upon this castle walls. (II. 3. 21–24)

²⁷ Mario DiGangi suggests that 'Edward regards favouritism as a species of friendship': 'Marlowe, Queer Studies, and Renaissance Homoeroticism', in *Marlowe, History, and Sexuality: New Critical Essays on Christopher Marlowe*, ed. by Paul Whitfield White (New York: AMS Press, 1998), pp. 195–212 (p. 209). The view is clearly not shared by his nobles and may account for his somewhat naïve attempts to recommend Gaveston to them.

²⁸ Ian McAdam, 'Edward II and the Illusion of Integrity', *Studies in Philology*, 92 (1995), 203–29 (p. 210).

The tattered ensign and the name 'Mortimer' itself become emblems of an inheritance that demands for its perpetuation the repetition of heroic deeds. Between them, they define young Mortimer's identity. As the Elizabethans looked back at medieval and earlier history from the informed vantage point of the late sixteenth century, the importance of this regenerating heroism was clear to them. In Shakespeare's *Henry V*, Canterbury and Ely encourage the King to war against France by suggesting that to do so would be to repeat and thereby sustain the heroic reputation of the past:

[CANTERBURY] Stand for your own, unwind your bloody flag,
Look back into your mighty ancestors;
 Go, my dread lord, to your great-grandsire's [Edward III's] tomb,
 From whom you claim; *invoke his warlike spirit.* (1. 2. 101–04, emphasis added)

[ELY] *Awake remembrance of these valiant dead,*
 And with your puissant arm *renew their feats.* (1. 2. 115–16, emphasis added)

Hal's 'great-grandsire' is young Prince Edward who assumes the English crown at the end of Marlowe's *Edward II*. The pattern of encyclical regal excellence with which the Elizabethans were most familiar was the journey from Edward III and the Black Prince to Henry V and the fields of Agincourt, but the legend stretched further than that: to Edward I (nicknamed 'Longshanks'), the most successful of the medieval monarchs, and back again to the talismanic myths of King Arthur and the Emperor Charlemagne. This great tradition of military heroism and conquest rested heavy on the Tudor psyche, and the willingness of Elizabethan literati to appeal to its authority suggests its glow had not in the least dimmed by the age of Marlowe and his contemporaries.

It was, though, a myth of repeating excellence on *foreign lands*. In the case of young Mortimer, the invocation of the spirit of his noble forebears, of the principle of regenerating heroism, is somewhat misplaced. The crusader ensign, which graced battles waged by his ancestors against infidels in the Holy Land, here flies in rebellion against the rightful King of England. This diminution of the heroic myth is something that finds persistent, and increasingly ironic, restatement as the play progresses.

Quickly, the initial discourse of lineage in Act I turns from a denigration of Gaveston to a denigration of the King himself in Act II.

MORTIMER JUNIOR. When wert thou in the field with banner spread?
 But once! And then thy soldiers marched like players,
 With garish robes, not armour; and thyself,
 Bedaubed with gold, rode laughing at the rest,
 Nodding and shaking of thy spangled crest
 Where women's favours hung like labels down.

LANCASTER. And thereof came it that the fleeing Scots,
 To England's high disgrace, have made this jig:
 'Maids of England, sore may you mourn,
 For your lemans you have lost at Bannocksbourn'. (II. 2. 181–90)

Bevington and Shapiro demonstrate how what they call the 'decay of ceremony' (here evidenced in Mortimer's disparaging comments about the King's dress codes) is interpreted by the nobles as 'an offense against the hierarchical structure upon which they depend no less than the king'.²⁹ Edward has failed to live up to the heroic ideal that his noblemen expect of him. His inappropriate dress betrays that wider shortcoming. First, he has failed to carry England's glories on foreign fields reducing the business of war to an effeminate pantomime. And second, he has fallen short of the obligation to preserve England's peace at home, allowing the Scots to ride roughshod over the northern English counties, bringing 'high disgrace' to England's reputation. Small wonder then that the rebellious nobles, having secured Gaveston's second exile, revile him as 'base groom, robber of kings' renown!' — the pluralization of 'kings' suggesting a generic failure of the encyclical pattern of kingly greatness.

Surprisingly, the King's supporters take a view not too dissimilar to the rebels. Spencer Jr appeals to the lineage of Edward II and laments that the King has not dealt with his opponents in the manner that true majesty demands. If he were the issue of Great Edward Longshanks, Spencer Jr claims, he would not suffer the insolence of the barons in his own realm (III. 1. 10–15). And if the King properly regarded his 'father's magnanimity' (III. 1. 16) and 'the honour of [his] name' (III. 1. 17) he would not tolerate such behaviour from his subjects. Spencer Jr appeals not simply to the King's sense of decorum but to a sense of inherited majesty. Edward is not behaving as an English king should behave; and, perhaps as a consequence, he is not being treated as an English king should be treated. Edward himself struggles to resurrect a heroic aura around himself, but one of his difficulties, as Mitali R. Pati points out, is that his 'myth-clichés block his perception of his real political situation'.³⁰ Edward is adept at classical allusion, at constructing the resonances of a classical myth, but this process serves only to impinge on his ability to perceive problems of state and to resolve them realistically.

It is a delicious touch that Spencer, the herald of these hard heroic truths, has himself been precipitously promoted to greatness from the obscurity of

²⁹ Bevington and Shapiro, "What are Kings, When regiment is Gone?", p. 268.

³⁰ Mitali R. Pati, 'The Deranged Metaphor of the King's Body Politic in Marlowe's *Edward II*', *Explorations in Renaissance Culture*, 20 (1994), 157–73 (p. 164).

peasanthood but, quite possibly, Marlowe does not intend us to read his comments as ironic. In England's socially stratified but all-encompassing mythology even the humblest of peasants understood the obligations of greatness. Spencer's words sting Edward, and just over a hundred lines later, when his foes are brought as prisoners before him, he falls to his knees and swears a fearful vengeance 'By this right hand, and by my father's sword' (III. 1. 130). Rising to his feet again, Edward attempts to assume the mantle of Mars, the defending deity of England:

Treacherous Warwick, traitorous Mortimer!
 If I be England's King, in lakes of gore
 Your headless trunks, your bodies will I trail,
 That you may drink your fill and quaff in blood,
 And stain my royal standard with the same,
 That so my bloody colours may suggest
 Remembrance of revenge immortally
 On your accursed traitorous progeny,
 You villains that have slain my Gaveston. (III. 1. 134–42)

In straining for a conception of military insuperability, Edward drifts away from the Pallas-tutored Mars of the emblem books and into a vacuous, self-centred rant — a further example of what Mitali Pati calls 'the misuse of rhetoric'.³¹ With his talk of lakes of blood, draughts of blood, headless trunks, and unending revenge, he reminds us of the grotesque figure of Death in the palace of Mars offered in Richard Linche's truncated translation of Vincenzo Cartari's *Le Imagini de i Dei gli Antichi*:

wherevpon a stately altar, he [i.e. Death] was offering
 sacrifices in goblets made with the skuls of men, and filled
 vp euen to the brim with humane blood; which oblation
 was consecrated to god Mars, with coales of fire (which
 set on flame the sacrifice) fetcht from many Citties, Townes
 and Holds, burnt and ruined by tyrannie of the Warres.³²

The rebels will be punished not for what they have done against England but for what they have done against Gaveston. Their blood will spatter the royal standard not as a warning against those who have ploughed up England's peace but as a 'Remembrance of revenge immortally' (III. 1. 140). The lineage of regenerating heroism is transformed into a lineage of regenerating regret, which will visit grief on the

³¹ Pati, 'Deranged Metaphor of the King's Body Politic', p. 163.

³² Vincenzo Cartari, *Le Imagini de i Dei de gli Antichi*, (Venice, 1571). The text is from Richard Linche's English translation, *The Fovntaine of Ancient Fiction* (London, 1599), XI^{r-v}.

‘accursed traitorous progeny’ (III. 1. 141) of those who killed Gaveston. The mire of civil war has unleashed its monster — or at least that is how Edward erroneously would like to characterize his wrath — and there is no place for the learning and wisdom of Pallas. Edward imagines himself not as the English Mars dispensing justice and measured punishment with the greater good of the realm in the back of his mind, but as the savage Mars Ultor intent only on blind, bloody retribution.

Claude J. Summers observes that, because of ‘its failure to promulgate a political lesson compatible with Tudor orthodoxy’, *Edward II* has been dismissed as a less than persuasive ‘history’ play. Summers goes on to suggest that this omission is neither a flaw nor an irrelevancy, since ‘the refusal to moralize history is at the heart of both the play’s profound political heterodoxy and the personal tragedy of the king’.³³ His views have found strong support, not least from Ian McAdam who sees the refusal to moralize as something that makes ‘the play more, not less, compelling as a work of art’.³⁴ Yet the present essay argues that some degree of historical moralizing *is* going on in this play. The myth of English heroic excellence — of kingly son inheriting from kingly father, of civil harmony, of the anglicized construct of peace at home and glorious conquest abroad — is several times articulated by characters in *Edward II* only to be repudiated and degraded by ensuing circumstances. The competition between this mythology and what may be called its antimythology — the ignominious scenario of civil mayhem and English blood spilled by English hands — drives both the action of the play and the intellectual and emotional paradoxes that underpin it. With peaceful England lost, can only civil war reclaim it? Can anyone step forward to reclaim paradise? Gaveston’s brief flirtation with the idea of paradise turns out to be spurious. Queen Isabella has an almost choric role in stating the precepts of the English mythology, presenting herself in the first four acts as a Pallas-type defender of England’s peace, its native history of greatness, and the sovereign’s untouchability. But her words and actions quickly disappoint. Mortimer Jr and the King himself claim the mantle of Mars-like warrior, but in action and morality, both fall short of the glorious ideal defined by Henry Peacham in *Minerva Britannia*.

In the final act, Marlowe deftly steers us away from whatever vestigial sympathies we may have for the Queen and the rebel cause. Her ‘moral metamorphosis’

³³ Claude J. Summers, ‘Sex, Politics, and Self-Realization in *Edward II*’, in *A Poet and a Filthy Play-Maker*, ed. by Friedenreich, Gill, and Kuriyama, pp. 221–40 (p. 222).

³⁴ McAdam, ‘Edward II and the Illusion of Integrity’, p. 203.

complete,³⁵ twice in the opening minutes of Act V, scene 2, Isabella encourages Mortimer Jr to murder King Edward, with the blatant proviso that her name should be kept out of it; and the King's grotesque execution in Act V, scene 5 at the hands of Mortimer's emissaries leaves little emotional space aside from revulsion. By the time young Prince Edward assumes the throne as Edward III, the reputations of both Mortimer and Isabella have been sufficiently degraded to allow their punishments to stand as a sign of the new King's strength and decisiveness rather than as a continuing symptom of the indiscriminate depravity of civil malaise.

If Prince Edward's presence has been understated in the preceding drama, it is both dominant and kingly in the last scene of the play. Mortimer Jr is summarily consigned to execution on the basis of hard evidence (his own letter); and Queen Isabella is committed to the Tower to await trial. At the end of *Edward II*, the newly crowned Edward III begins to demonstrate the true qualities of kingship — strength, justice, and decisiveness. For this reason, Marlowe's subtitle to the play speaks of the 'troublesome' reign and 'lamentable' death of Edward II but stops short of describing the story as a tragedy. For the Elizabethan playgoer of the 1590s no saga that culminated with the emergence of Edward III could be defined persuasively as tragic. Nonetheless, there were important lessons to be taught and learned in the turbulent preamble to his coronation, and the personal travails and sufferings of Edward II relate directly to them. Edward's kingdom disintegrates not through calamitous and unusual circumstances but through what Patrick Ryan calls 'entirely natural causes — human weakness, cruelty, and lust for power'.³⁶ With Edward III on the throne a great phase of English history begins, but Marlowe's play reminds its audience that England's natural seat of majesty is both glorious and vulnerable. The resurging excellence of an English paradise relies on a precise concatenation of circumstances and dispositions, and its delicate balance can never be taken for granted.

³⁵ Deats, 'Myth and Metamorphosis', p. 313.

³⁶ Patrick Ryan, 'Marlowe's *Edward II* and the Medieval Passion Play', *Comparative Drama*, 32 (1998), 465–95 (p. 465).

MAKING MEN OUT OF KINGS: SHAKESPEARE'S SOURCES AND KINGSHIP

Mary-Rose McLaren

Holinshed, Halle, and to a lesser extent, Fabyan, are given credit for providing Shakespeare with his historical sources.¹ However, these histories were not written in a historical or literary vacuum. In fact, they draw heavily on earlier histories of London, particularly the London chronicles, written mainly in the vernacular by London guild members in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Fabyan, in constructing his elaborate London chronicle late in the fifteenth century, compiled several London chronicles and other documents into one text. Similarly, Stow collected numerous manuscripts of the London chronicles and used them extensively in his *Annals* and *Survey of London*. These accounts of events, which originally appear in the London chronicles, are then picked up by

¹ Such an interpretation was set in place by W. G. Boswell-Stone, *Shakespeare's Holinshed the Chronicle and the Historical Plays* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1907). At the time Boswell-Stone was groundbreaking in recognizing the role played by Halle, Fabyan, and Stow as well as Holinshed. Although further work has been done on Shakespeare's literary sources since, the focus has been on understanding the interplay of historical stories and the creation of characters, and trying to determine whether or not Shakespeare had a sense of history rather than thinking about those texts which might have influenced his historical understanding. See Harold Jenkins, 'Shakespeare's History Plays: 1900–1951', *Shakespeare Survey*, 6 (1953), 1–15. Dominique Goy-Blanquet, *Shakespeare's Early History Plays from Chronicle to Stage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 3–8, gives background to disputes on Shakespeare's historical perception, but does not mention any sources in doing so. These are later discussed, when Goy-Blanquet mentions two sources only, saying, 'After reading the two chronicles through, I came out fairly assured that they had no regular pattern to speak of, but an equal splattering of providential judgements' (p. 17). The focus of Paola Pugliatti's *Shakespeare the Historian* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), pp. 15–25, is also on cultural context and perceptions, rather than on sources. Chap. 2 considers sixteenth- and seventeenth-century sources, but does not look at any earlier possible historical sources.

Halle or Holinshed, and often reappear in Shakespeare's history plays. Notably, there are also occasions when certain historical details appear in the London chronicles and again in Shakespeare's history plays, but are not found in Halle, Holinshed, or even Fabyan. In considering Shakespeare's sources for his history plays, therefore, it is important that we look at the literary and social context in which he was writing, and not only at immediate and easily identifiable sources. This article examines the role played by the London chronicles as either direct or indirect sources for Shakespeare when he was writing his history plays, particularly *Henry V* and *Henry VI* parts one, two, and three. In particular, questions of the nature of kingship and good rule are central in the London chronicle narratives of the fifteenth century and in Shakespeare's history plays. However, these questions are explored and resolved in very different ways by the London chroniclers and by Shakespeare. By comparing ideas of kingship in the London chronicles and in Shakespeare's history plays in this study we can create a richer picture of the context in which Shakespeare's writing took place. So doing, we may also shed some light on the intellectual changes that took place in London between 1450 and 1600. The relationship between the London chronicles and Shakespeare's history plays has not previously been examined in any detail. Therefore it is first necessary to provide a brief background on the London chronicles, and to consider some of the ways we can see these working as sources in Shakespeare's writing.

The London Chronicles

Early in the fifteenth century, London merchants began to read and write in the vernacular.² The London chronicles were the product of their endeavours: after they had finished their day job as clerk or merchant or goldsmith they took up the evening's task of recording the history of London from 1189 to the year in which they wrote. They drew upon diverse sources — letters and letter books (these were records kept by the city), guild records, pamphlets, oral and eyewitness accounts, rumour, and official accounts, as well as other London chronicles.³ Those who

² On the London chronicles, see Mary-Rose McLaren, *The London Chronicles of the Fifteenth Century: A Revolution in English Writing* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2002).

³ Recent work by Andrew Broertjes identifies the sources of some accounts in the London chronicles as propaganda emanating from the court or from the king's opponents. See Andrew Broertjes, "Winning the People's Voice": Usurpation, Propaganda and State-influenced History in Fifteenth-Century England' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Western Australia, 2006).

worked hardest wrote long and detailed chronicles of a secular nature, up to two hundred vellum or paper pages. Many of the London chronicles are related in content, but almost all have extensive passages that are also independent of any other extant text. Some of these chronicles are in professional hands, but many are not.

The emergence of the London chronicles was significant in terms of both history and literacy. By writing these vernacular chronicles, lay citizens claimed ownership of the history they contained; and they supported the further spread of lay literacy by providing texts for teaching both reading and writing. These London chronicles offer us an insight into the perceptions of fifteenth-century lay Londoners. The chroniclers wrote about what mattered to them, and consequently much of what they have to say concerns events in and around London — particularly those in which they were involved. Other entries include major events in the wider community, such as the French wars, displays of kingship, and manifestations of order and disorder. These types of event are of interest to the London chroniclers because London was, after all, the King's Chamber,⁴ and they reflect upon the relationship between London and the king.

Because of their nature as lay, secular, and mostly vernacular, many London chronicles were kept in homes.⁵ We can assume that, while forty-five manuscripts are known to have survived, many more, possibly even hundreds, were burned or otherwise destroyed because they were not in environments where they were protected from fire, vermin, and flood.

It is important to acknowledge that Fabyan's chronicle is the last of the great London chronicles.⁶ Fabyan is innovative with the form, combining the histories

⁴ The chroniclers themselves use this term. The author of *The Great Chronicle* draws on Lydgate's account of Henry VI's entry into London in 1432, and assigns these words to the mayor of London: 'youre moost and notable Cite of london other wyse called youre Chambre'. London, Guildhall Library, MS 3313, published as *The Great Chronicle*, ed. by A. H. Thomas and I. D. Thornley (London: [n.pub.], 1938; repr. in facsimile, Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1983).

⁵ London chronicles were kept by guilds and the Corporation, but also appear in commonplace books and as continuations to Brut chronicles. London chronicles appear in both professional and non-professional hands. For a detailed exploration of the location of London chronicles, see Mary-Rose McLaren, 'Reading, Writing and Recording: Literacy and the London Chronicles in the Fifteenth Century', in *London and the Kingdom: Essays in Honour of Caroline M. Barron. Proceedings of the 2004 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. by Matthew Davies and Andrew Prescott (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2008), pp. 346–65.

⁶ Published as *The Newe Cronycles of England and of Fraunce*, first published by Pynson, 1516. Later printed as *Fabyan's Chronicle* by Rastell, 1533. The most current edition is *The New Chronicles of England and France*, ed. by H. Ellis (London, 1811).

of England and France. Like several other London chronicles he uses a Brut for the years to 1189.⁷ However, at 1189 the entries for England become a London chronicle, closely related in parts to a number of other London chronicles.⁸ This chronicle is often perceived as the precursor to Renaissance historical writing because it was printed by Pynson in 1516 and therefore received wide circulation. It is nonetheless a London chronicle, influenced by the numerous London chronicles in manuscript and influencing the London chronicles, whether in print or manuscript, which were written throughout the sixteenth century. Shakespeare's use of Fabyan should immediately lead the reader to question what use Shakespeare might have made of the London chronicles as sources for the history plays.

The London Chronicles and Shakespeare's Histories

There are several good examples of the connection between Shakespeare's material and the London chroniclers: Dame Eleanor Cobham's penance, the dispute between the Duke of Gloucester and the Bishop of Winchester in 1425, and Henry V's battle at Agincourt to name a few, where ideas, language, and images have wound their way from one text through to another 150 years later.

Dame Eleanor's Penance

An example of London chronicle material finding its way into Shakespeare's plays is the penance of Dame Eleanor Cobham in 1441 (see Table 1). Dame Eleanor's penance was very visible to Londoners, being almost street theatre in itself. After being found guilty of necromancy, Eleanor's co-conspirators were publicly executed. Dame Eleanor (the Duchess of Gloucester), because she is a noble woman,

⁷ London chronicles usually begin at 1189. They are identified by the fact that they date by mayoral years and list the city officials. It is not unusual for London chronicles to be attached to Brut chronicles and to continue the 'Brut story' in London form from 1189.

⁸ *The Great Chronicle* (MS Guildhall 3313); London, British Library, MS Cotton Vitellius A XVI published in *Chronicles of London*, ed. by C. L. Kingsford (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1905); London, British Library, MS Egerton 1995 published as *Historical Collections of a London Citizen – Gregory's Chronicle*, Camden Society, n.s., 17 (Westminster: Camden Society, 1876); the Bradford MS published as Bradford West Yorkshire Archives, MS 32D86/42 in McLaren, *The London Chronicles*; Trinity College Dublin, MS 509 published as 'Bale's Chronicle' in *Six Town Chronicles*, ed. by R. Flenley and others (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1911).

Table 1. Dame Eleanor's Penance in London Chronicles, Stow, and Shakespeare.

LONDON CHRONICLES Harley 565 makes reference to Dame Eleanor's trial and has a fairly full account of her procession, although no reference is made to thunderstorms. 0. 9. 1 has a very extensive account of Dame Eleanor and the associated trials for necromancy, covering several pages of the manuscript. This passage introduces the episode and follows an account of a procession of Henry VI's through London, which is disturbed by storms.	LONDON, BRITISH LIBRARY, MS HARLEY 565 'In þis year my lady of Gloucestre hadde confessyd here wiche craft as it is a forn seid she was yoyned be alle þe spirualte assent to do penaunce to comen to london fro Westminster on þe moneday next suyng and londe at þe Temple Brugge out of here Barge and þere she tok a taper of wax of ii lb in here hond and went so þorugh fletstrete on her ffoot and hoodles un to poules and þere she offred up here taper at þe high auter [...] and at iche of the tymes þe mair with þe schirreves and þe Craftes of london were ready at þe places there she scholde londe.' CAMBRIDGE, TRINITY COLLEGE LIBRARY, MS 0. 9. 1 'An þen was it knowen þat certeyn clerkes, and women þat ar called wicches had made theire operacion and theire craft to destroy men and women or whom they list vnto deth by theire fals craft and worching.' [Dame Eleanor is named as the leader. Also named are Roger, her clerke (Chicago University Library, MS 245 is very similar for this account and names him as Roger Bolingbroke), Thomas Suthwell, and the Witch of Eye] [An extensive series of trials is outlined as well as the process of Dame Eleanor being divorced from the Duke. MS 0. 9. 1 then says Eleanor must go three days of the week from Westminster to London 'with a tapir burning in her hand,' and there she offered a taper of a pound of wax. After her penance, when she is being sent away]: 'þere was such wedryng of thonder lightnyng, hayll and rayne þat the peple were sore adredde and agast at the grete noyse and hydous of þe weder þat sodenly was doon and shewed þere at theire passage at þat time.'
STOW¹ Stow has drawn heavily on MS 0. 9. 1 or a similar text.	'[...] she came from Westminster, by water, and landed at the Temple Bridge, from whence, with a taper of waxe of two pound in hir hande, she went through Fleetestrete, hoodlesse (saue a kercheffe) to Pauls, where she offered hir taper at the high altar [...]. On Fryday she landed at Queene Hiue, and so went through Cheape to S. Michaels in Cornehill, in forme aforesaid: at all which times the Maior, sherifes, and crafts of London, receiued hir and accompanied hir.'

SHAKESPEARE, 2 HENRY VI² Thunderstorms at Dame Eleanor's arrest (I. 4. 23, 40) are a direct result of her association with spirits. In Shakespeare the crime is clear — using necromancy to determine the future, and by implication, to put Gloucester on the throne. This is not the accusation in Halle, Holinshed or Fabyan, where she supposedly made an image of the King in wax and then destroyed it.	BUCKINGHAM: Such as my heart doth tremble to unfold. A sort of naughty persons, lewdly bent, Under the countenance and confederacy Of Lady Eleanor, the Protector's wife, The ringleader and head of all this rout, Have practised dangerously against your state, Dealing with witches and with conjurors, Whom we have apprehended in the fact, Raising up wicked spirits from under ground, Demanding of King Henry's life and death And other your highness's Privy Council. (ii. 1. 167–77)
The divorce, which is explicitly recorded in 0. 9. 1, is implied.	GLOUCESTER: Noble she is, but if she have forgot Honour and virtue and conversed with such As, like to pitch, defile nobility, I banish her from my bed and company And give her as prey to law and shame (ii. 1. 206–10)
Appearing for her processional penance, she is barefoot with a white sheet around her, verses pinned on her back, carrying a wax candle and accompanied by sheriffs.	DUCHESS: Methinks I should not thus be led along, Mailed up in shame, with papers on my back, And followed with a rabble that rejoice To see my tears and hear my deep-fet groans. The ruthless flint doth cut my tender feet, And when I start, the envious people laugh (ii. 4. 31–36)

¹Quotation from Boswell-Stone, *Shakespeare's Holinshed the Chronicle and the Historical Plays*, p. 261. He is citing J. Stow, *The Annales of England [...] untill this present yeare 1605* (London, 1605), p. 628.

²Quotations from Shakespeare's plays are taken from *Complete Works*, ed. by Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988).

undertakes an elaborate penance through London streets before being exiled to the Isle of Man. The arrest of Dame Eleanor is recorded in Holinshed, Halle, and Fabyan, but the penitential procession, so widely recorded in the London chronicles, is not. The procession is, however, included in detail in *2 Henry VI*, where it offers an opportunity for a public encounter between the Duke of Gloucester and Dame Eleanor. Some of Shakespeare's details, such as the thunderstorm, are exclusive to the London chronicles.

The very detailed account in the contemporary London chronicles is an indication of the significance of the event within London. In *2 Henry VI* the striking visual nature of the event is highlighted, and it is used by Shakespeare to raise questions of fidelity and isolation, and to create the atmosphere of mistrust and ambition that supposedly flourished under Henry's rule. While Shakespeare's choice to include thunderstorms had clear dramatic effect, it is a further indication that he was using sources beyond those usually attributed to him. Similarly, the nature of Dame Eleanor's crime and the detail of the procession are drawn from earlier, and probably London chronicle, accounts.

The Battle of Agincourt

Henry V's battle at Agincourt provides one of the best-known speeches in Shakespeare. It is hard to know how much of its content was common currency — reflections on a great moment passed on by oral tradition. However, it is intriguing that amongst the very earliest accounts of Agincourt is a ballad (probably composed about 1416), which is copied into London, British Library, MS Cotton Cleopatra C IV — a London chronicle⁹ (see Table 2 for the Battle of Agincourt as it is presented in the London chronicles, Holinshed, and Shakespeare). It is here that the idea of becoming gentle by shedding blood alongside the king makes its appearance. The idea is not evident in any of Shakespeare's supposed sources and yet reoccurs in Henry's speech when he says:

For he today that sheds his blood with me
Shall be my brother, be he ne'er so vile,
This day shall gentle his condition. (IV. 3. 61–63)

Many of the chronicle accounts are similar to the accounts in the *Gesta Henrici V*, probably the work of a courtier accompanying Henry in France.¹⁰ There are several versions of the life and deeds of Henry V, written over a one-hundred-year period. Holinshed's version is similar to these, and may have been taken from a manuscript

⁹ Published in *Chronicles of London*, ed. by Kingsford.

¹⁰ *Gesta Henrici Quinti*, ed. by Frank Taylor and John S. Roskell (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975). Many of these stories are also preserved in Titus Livius, *Henrici quinti angliae regis gesta*, ed. by Benjamin Williams (London: Sumptibus Societatis, 1850). Fabyan also drew upon this range of sources in his account of the Battle of Agincourt. On the *Gesta* as propaganda, see Broertjes, 'Winning the People's Voice', pp. 255–64.

Table 2. The Battle of Agincourt in London Chronicles, Holinshed, and Shakespeare.

MS EGERTON 1995 (<i>Gregory's Chronicle</i>) <i>The Great Chronicle</i> is similar to this account, with some minor variations. Fabyan is quite different, providing an account of the battle itself, particularly the use of long bows and stakes (<i>New Chronicles of England and France</i>, ed. by Ellis, p. 580). It probably draws on one of the Lives of Henry the Fifth.	1415: 'And a-pon the ffryday that ys to saye the day of Syn Cryspyn and Cryspynyany alle the ryalle pouer of ffraunce come by-fore oure kynge and hys lytylle blessyd mayne. And thenne they sawe the Dolfynne whythe alle the lordys of ffraunce were by-fore oure good kynge Embatellyd in iii Batellys the number of iii schore M^l men of Armys. And that was the fayryste syght of armyde men that evyr any man saye in any place. And the kyng sawe he myght not passe whythe owt Batayle And thenne he sayde unto hys lytylle mayne Serys and ffelowys yendyr maynye wylle lette us of oure waye And they wylle not come unto us. But nowe lette every man preve hymselfe a goode man thys day and avance hys baner in the beste tyme of the day and yere. And the kyng roode ande hys basnet in hys hede And alle othyr men wente on hyr foote a passe in hyr hoole araye and Englysche myle or that they assemblyde. And thorowe goddys grace the kynge made hys was thoroughe the thыckyste of alle the batayle.'
MS COTTON CLEOPATRA C IV Has a longer account and a longer speech, which is taken from a ballad in circulation at the time. It contains a considerable amount of unique material.	'[...] elles all þe lordys of ffraunce lay tofore the kynge <i>in</i> his hy way as he schuld passe towarde calys embateylyd <i>in</i> iii batayles as þe ffrensshmen sayde hem silfe þe nowmbre of lx m^{li} men of armes & þ^o were þ^e faireste men of armys þ^t ever any man saw <i>in</i> any plase. And owre kynge w^t his litell mayne sey well he must nedys fyzte or he might not come to Calays by þ^e hy way/ And þan he sayde to his lordys & to his mayne: Syres & ffelowes þ^e zondere mayne þenk to lette vs of owre way/ & þ^{ei} wil nat come to vs/ lete every man preve hym silfe a good man þ^{is} day & avant banes <i>in</i> þe beste tyme of the yere/ for as I am trew kynge & knyght for me þ^{is} day schalle never Inglonde rawnsowme pay/ ertse many a wyght man schall leue is weddes for here erste to deth I wil be dyght & perfore lordynge for the love of swete Jhesu helpe maynten Inglondes ryght þ^{is} day. Allso Archers to yow I praye no fote þ^t ze fle away erste be we alle beten <i>in</i> þ^{is} felde. And þenke be englysshmen þ^t never wolde fle at no batelle for azenste one of vs þowþ^e þ^e be tene þenke Criste will help vs <i>in</i> owre ryght. But I wolde no blood were spilte/ Cryste help me so now <i>in</i> þis case bot þ^o þ^t been cause of this trespass [...] Owre kynge tho bad wyþ^e full glad chere and so thei dyde at þ^t word/ lord knyght & archere þ^e men myght see a semble sade þ^t turnyd

	many ouer to tene & tray for many a lorde p ^{er} ryght low lay þ ^t common was of blod full gent By evensong tyme sobely to say þ ^{er} halpe us god omnipotent.’
HOLINSHED III. 553/2/44¹	‘It is said, that as he heard one of the host vtter his wish to another thus: “I would to God there were with vs now so manie good soldiers as are at this houre within England!” the king answered: “I would not wish a man more here than I haue; we are indeed in comparison to the enimies but a few, but if God of his clemencie doo fauour vs, and our iust cause, (as I trust he will,) we shall speed well inough.”’
SHAKESPEARE, <i>HENRY V</i>	WARWICK: Of fighting men they have full threescore thousand. EXETER: That’s five to one. Besides they are all fresh. (IV. 3. 3–4) KING HARRY: We few, we happy few, we band of brothers. For he today that sheds his blood with me Shall be my brother, be he ne’er so vile, This day shall gentle his condition: And gentlemen in England now abed Shall think themselves accursed they were not here, And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks That fought with us upon Saint Crispin’s day. (IV. 3. 60–67)

¹ This quotation from Holinshed is found in Boswell-Stone, *Shakespeare’s Holinshed the Chronicle and the Historical Plays*, p. 190.

of *The First English Life of King Henry the Fifth*, written about 1513 and owned by Stow, but now lost, which was lent by Stow to Holinshed.¹¹ It is evident that the small size of Henry’s army is repeated throughout the texts and is the source of dramatic opportunity for Shakespeare. Similarly, much of the detail of Henry’s speech in Shakespeare has its origins (either directly or indirectly) in the *Gesta* or a like text. However, the idea of being made gentle by shedding blood alongside the king is now exclusive to some London chronicles that preserve contemporary popular ballads. Shakespeare may have taken this idea from a ballad, from a

¹¹ *The First English Life of King Henry the Fifth*, ed. by Charles Lethbridge Kingsford (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911), p. vii. Kingsford identifies only two of these manuscripts as surviving. The *Life* is apparently a translation of the *Vita Henrici Quinti* of Tito Livius (ibid., p. xiv).

London chronicle, or from a common cultural belief. However, he did not take it from any of his recognized sources.

The Dispute of 1425

The dispute between the Duke of Gloucester and the Bishop of Winchester in 1425 offers a similar insight into Shakespeare's use of sources (Table 3).

Shakespeare has conflated two events: the original dispute between the Duke of Gloucester and the Bishop of Winchester, and the Parliament some months later. We can see that there are some details — the stones and the shutting of shops — that are carried through from the London chronicles to Shakespeare, perhaps via Fabyan (certainly the London chronicles were Fabyan's source at this point), although they are not at all evident in Holinshed or Halle. In the London chronicles the shutting of shops is of particular significance because it is a disruption to the lives and livelihoods of the merchant class, who are also the chroniclers. In Shakespeare it is used as a dramatic device to show the state of the nation under a child king whose uncles and protectors cannot work together for the benefit of the land. Both are ultimately about the same thing — the role of the king and the place of order in maintaining prosperity.

Shakespeare's Sources and Cultural Context

The above examples of material that are common to the London chronicles and to Shakespeare's history plays indicate that Shakespeare's use of sources was more diverse than is usually acknowledged, including manuscripts and possibly ballads and pamphlets that are now preserved in chronicle manuscripts, as well as sources in print. Significantly, there is a cultural context in which Shakespeare's writing takes place, which has often been overlooked. Holinshed, Halle, Fabyan, and Stow are part of a body of historical writing dating back over 150 years and sit in the context of other works which record a civic view of the history of London, and which often contain eyewitness accounts or accounts very close to events themselves. While Fabyan, Stow, and some other London chronicles were in print for Shakespeare, there were plenty of other substantial London chronicles available in manuscript: *The Great Chronicle*, versions of *Gregory's Chronicle*, versions of MS Cotton Vitellius A XVI, and others were widely accessible and in general circulation as London chronicles in their own right, or as continuations to Brut

Table 3. The Dispute of 1425 in *Gregory's Chronicle*, Fabyan, and Shakespeare.

LONDON CHRONICLE	FABYAN	SHAKESPEARE
MS Egerton 1995¹ <i>(Gregory's Chronicle)</i>	Fabyan² (Not in Holinshed or Halle)	<i>1 Henry VI</i> , III. 1. 81–88
1425–26: And thenne the pepylle of the Cytte hyrde there of And they in haste schytte in ther shoppys And come downe to the gatyng of the Brygge in kepynge of the Cytte Ande savacyon of the Cytte a gayns the kyngys enmys ffor alle the shoppys in london were schytte in one howr [several entries covering a period of four months; parliament begins in Leicester ...] the nexte day they were charygde that they shulde leve hyr battys at hyr ynnys And thenne they toke grete stonys yn hyr bosomys and hyr slyvys and so they wente to the Parlyment wt hyr lordys. Ande thys Parlyment sum men callyd the Parlyment of Battys.	[...] certayne seruauntes of the forenamed bishop [...] gaderyd to theym a more nombre of archers & men of armys, & assaured the gate with shot and other meanes of warre; in somuch, that the commons of the cytie heying therof, shytte in theyr shoppes and sped them thyder in great nombre. [...] The parliament] was clepyd of the Comon people the Parlyament of Battres: the cause was, for Proclamacyons were made, þ' men shulde leue theyr swerdes & other wepeyns in theyr innys, the people toke great battes & stauys in theyr neckes, and so folowed theyr lordes and maisters vnto the parlyament. And whan þ' wepyn was inhybyted theym, then they toke stonys & plummettes of lede, & trussyd them secretly in theyr sleuys and bosomys.	The Bishop and the Duke of Gloucester's men Forbidden late to carry any weapon Have filled their Pockets full of pebble stoness, And, banding themselves in contrary parts, Do pelt so fast at one another's pate, That many have their giddy brains knocked out. Our windows are broke down in every street, And we for fear compelled to shut our shops.

¹ Also in *The Great Chronicle* (MS Guildhall 3313), 1425 is one of a few years where there are substantial variations within chronicle groupings. See McLaren, *The London Chronicles*, pp. 242–43.

² This quotation is taken from *New Chronicles of England and France*, ed. by Ellis, pp. 595–96. An abbreviated account appears in Boswell-Stone, *Shakespeare's Holinshed the Chronicle and the Historical Plays*, p. 221.

chronicles.¹² In general we can be fairly confident that there were manuscripts of London chronicles available in London for those who wanted to find them in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

Why does this matter? If we want to understand what Shakespeare is doing, then it is appropriate that we understand the context in which he is working. Literacy increased in the merchant classes throughout the fifteenth century. Thrupp suggests a figure of 50 per cent for lay literacy in the mid-fifteenth century.¹³ We can assume it was considerably higher a generation later, at the end of the fifteenth century.¹⁴ These people read and wrote vociferously.¹⁵ And what they wrote most were chronicles. These chronicles tell us what they thought about London and the world around them, and they are full of perceptions and images of kingship.

Shakespeare's writing occurs within this wide literary context, not simply within the context of Holinshed, Halle, and Fabyan. This raises numerous

¹² *Arnold's Chronicle* was first printed in Antwerp in 1502 and then in Southwark in 1520 with a continuation. The current edition is *The Customs of London, Otherwise Called Arnold's Chronicle*, ed. by F. Douce (London: Rivington, 1811). John Stow's *A Summarie of the Chronicles of England, from the first arriving of Brut in this island vnto this present year of Christ 1590* was published in London in 1590 and went through numerous editions with abridgements and continuations into the seventeenth century. Examples of Brut chronicles with London continuations appear from the mid- to late fifteenth century and can be found in Cambridge, University Library, MS H. h. 6. 9, published 1420–28 as 'Appendix D' in *The Brut*, pt 2, ed. by F. W. D. Brie, EETS, o.s., 136 (London: Oxford University Press, 1908); Cambridge, Trinity College, MS O. 9. 1, published 1430–46 as 'Text F' in *The Brut*, pt 2, ed. by Brie; London, British Library, MS Egerton 650, published 1419–30 as 'Text E' in *The Brut*, pt 2, ed. by Brie; Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson B173, fragments published as 'Appendix C' and 'Appendix E' in *The Brut*, pt 2, ed. by Brie; University of Chicago Library, MS 254; and other fragmentary manuscripts. Fabyan's *Chronicle* was the most sophisticated of the Brut-London texts and was first published in 1516.

¹³ S. Thrupp, *The Merchant Class of Medieval London 1300–1500* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), pp. 51–52.

¹⁴ There is plenty of evidence that by the end of the fifteenth century literacy was a condition of being accepted for apprenticeship for some guilds and that many apprentices could read and write. It is a fair assumption that many, if not most, of their masters could also read and write (otherwise who could test them, and why would literacy be perceived as so important?). This question of literacy levels is explored in my paper, 'Reading, Writing and Recording', and will be further explored in the future. See *London and the Kingdom*, ed. by Davies and Prescott.

¹⁵ The artefacts of their literacy support this argument — the number of chronicles in manuscript with added notes, as well as letters, accounts, pamphlets, banners, and commonplace books all suggest a reading public. The emergence of lay schools and public libraries as the fifteenth century progresses is further evidence of the growth of literacy.

questions about the similarities and the differences between the chroniclers' presentation of ideas and Shakespeare's presentation of similar ideas approximately a hundred years later. The presentation of kings provides an intriguing case study of these similarities and differences.

Kings in London Chronicles

How did London chroniclers see their kings? The practical answer is that they saw them when they processed through the streets of London. There are numerous occasions in London's civic life in the fifteenth century when processional pageants take place, usually at times of great regal celebrations.¹⁶ These processions were orchestrated by the merchant class through their guilds and were essentially street theatre.¹⁷ The king — or honoured person — would follow the processional route through London, and at various sites would be greeted by pageants built on scaffolds or in shops or houses.¹⁸ These pageants depicted biblical scenes and significant events from the king's past or heritage, and were filled with colour, music, and symbolism. It was usual at each pageant for the king to be addressed directly by one or more of the actors, offering words of encouragement or inspiration. These pageants are recorded by the London chroniclers and display particular images of what kings should be like. Such street theatre constructed by Londoners for the king was therefore a statement of respect and appreciation, but also a statement of expectation and responsibility.

In these processions there are three central images: pilgrimage, the ideal king, and ordered rule. MS 0. 9. 1 gives us an extremely detailed eyewitness account of Henry VI's arrival in London after his coronation in Paris in 1432.¹⁹ All of London

¹⁶ Some examples are Richard II's arrival in London in 1392, Henry V's return from Agincourt, Henry VI's coronation in Paris and his return to London, Margaret of Anjou's arrival and marriage to Henry VI, and Catherine of Aragon's arrival to marry Prince Arthur in 1502.

¹⁷ The court orchestrated processions through the cities but these were rarely accompanied by pageants. Sometimes the court added a pageant to an otherwise civic procession, as recorded in *The Great Chronicle* for the procession of Catherine of Aragon in 1502, but generally pageants were the work of guilds.

¹⁸ The processional route through London and the sites of the pageants were fairly well set by the beginning of the fifteenth century. See McLaren, *London Chronicles*, p. 53.

¹⁹ Very similar accounts are also recorded in those manuscripts that are related to MS 0. 9. 1 — Chicago MS 254 and CUL, MS H. h. 6. 9. A similar account, but with some different details, appears in MS Egerton 1995 (*Gregory's Chronicle*). Lydgate's verse account of the event appears in

becomes a stage for the unfolding of this drama.²⁰ Entering the city at London Bridge, Henry encounters the King's Champion 'in full myght and power' and is then greeted by Nature, Grace, and Fortune. Six celestial virgins give gifts from the Holy Spirit, as well as royal gifts — a crown of glory, a sceptre of meekness and piety, a sword of might and victory, a mantle of prudence, a shield of faith and a helm of health, a girdle of love, and perfect peace.²¹ Such gift giving is redolent with symbolism and works as a re-enactment for the people of London of the coronation in Paris.²² Thus dressed as a kingly knight, Henry continues to the next pageant where he meets a child dressed as a king and governed by Mercy, Truth, and Cleanness, and by two judges and seven sergeants.²³ At Chepe 'a royall toure likned to Paradyse *with* many dyuers trees beryng eueryche dyuers frutes' is built over the conduit. With red and white wine flowing, and Lydgate's list of fruits including oranges, almonds, pomegranates, lemons, quinces, pippins, peaches, and custards, it is a place of great prosperity and fertility. The visual image of this must

The Great Chronicle (MS Guildhall 3313). It appears, however, that Lydgate was not in London at the time of the procession, but built his poetic representation from written and oral accounts. See C. David Benson, 'Civic Lydgate: The Poet and London', in *John Lydgate: Poetry, Culture and Lancastrian England*, ed. by Larry Scanlon and James Simpson (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), pp. 147–68 (p. 152).

²⁰ Other chronicle accounts tell us that tapestries would have hung along the processional route, as well as the pageants being set up at regular intervals. Scaffolds were built all along the route so that the people of London could see what was happening. Similar use of the town streets as the location of processional theatre occurs in York and probably in numerous other centres. Established processional routes give an indication of the regularity of this sort of event.

²¹ In MS 0. 9. 1 there are six virgins but seven gifts are given, betokening the gifts of the Spirit. In Chicago MS 254, which is very similar, seven virgins give a gift each. It is likely that the scribe of MS 0. 9. 1 has made a mistake and recorded six rather than seven.

²² I have said elsewhere that this is a manifestation of the metaphorical dressing of the knight in Caxton's *The Boke of the Ordre of Chivalry*, ed. by Alfred T. P. Byles, EETS, o.s., 168 (London: Oxford University Press, 1926) and of the king in coronation (McLaren, *London Chronicles*, p. 54). It is particularly appropriate here because Henry is returning from his coronation in France. However, such gift giving is not limited to this event.

²³ It is clear from Lydgate's poem, and from different accounts of entries into London, that pageant characters often spoke to the honoured person. However, there are few examples of this in the MS 0. 9. 1 account other than the giant. Catherine of Aragon's entry pageant, as it is recorded in *The Great Chronicle*, has numerous characters speak to her — some for so long that she must move on before they are finished. It is possible that direct speech might not be recorded in the manuscripts because the chronicler could not hear what was said or because the visual but not the oral was considered to be important.

have been all the more stunning for the procession occurring in February. In this tower are three more virgins, named Mercy, Grace, and Pity, and at the end of the garden are the lawgivers Enoch and Eli. Further on, at the cross in Chepe, a Castle Royal has been constructed upon which is the tree of Jesse. We might expect to see such a prop in miracle plays and cycles, where it is Jesus whose inheritance is directly traced to the characters of the Old Testament, and through Adam to God.²⁴ Here, however, Henry's rule is an earthly mirror of the celestial and is endorsed by God. Finally Henry arrives at St Paul's where he is greeted by a multitude of angels. Again, such angels are common in miracle plays and are reminiscent of the traditional Christmas scene and its associations with peace and redemption in the birth of a king. The reforming and healing role of the ideal king is implicit in such a concept.

The function of the pageant is clear: to enforce the idea that with the king as a representative of God's rule on earth, all 'his people' can experience 'ioye' and 'comfort'. The fact that the people view this pageant with 'hertly ioye' links the ideal and the real. The pageant is simultaneously a representation and a manifestation of good rule. The colour, music, prosperity, and excitement generated by the streets of London being transformed into images of paradise make the ideal of kingship momentarily real to its public.²⁵

Pageants such as these aim to state London's support for the king while also reinforcing the perception of how a truly ordained king behaves. The location of the pageants in the streets becomes a physical representation of this symbiotic relationship between the king and the city. The whole city does indeed become the stage for the playing out of these ideas in a dramatic fashion.

Shakespeare's Kings

When we turn to the ways in which Shakespeare presents kings in his history plays we see that the soliloquies of Richard II, Henry V, and Henry VI are concerned primarily with the conflict between being king and man. There are two themes

²⁴ The Jesse tree is given prominence in Play 7 of the N Town plays, where there is discussion of 'a blyssyd braunch', and where David identifies himself as 'I am David of Jesse rote'. See *The N-Town Play*, *Cotton MS Vespasian D.8*, ed. by Stephen Spector, EETS, s.s., 11–12, 2 vols (Oxford: EETS, 1991), I, 66.

²⁵ For a full discussion of the meaning of the procession, see McLaren, *London Chronicles*, pp. 53–55.

emerging from a consideration of Shakespeare's kings that will be focused on here: what it means to be a king, and pageantry as a metaphor for life.

What Does It Mean to Be a King?

The most striking thing about Shakespeare's kings is that they think about what being a king means — not simply in terms of social structure, but in terms of what it means to them as people.

When Prince Hal becomes Henry V he makes an explicit choice to behave as an archetypal medieval king when he tells his dying father of 'the noble change that I have purposed' (v. 5. 154). Nonetheless, he sees the crown, the symbol of kingship, as an enemy that consumes those who wear it. He does not perceive the symbolic dressing as empowering him as a king, but as diminishing his humanity (v. 5. 157–68). His choice to change his life on becoming king is restated when he speaks to his brothers:

My father is gone wild into his grave,
For in his tomb lie my affections;
And with his spirits sadly I survive
To mock the expectation of the world. (v. 2. 122–25)

The idea is enforced yet again when, while processing through London, Henry comes upon Falstaff. That this moment of drama occurs during a procession suggests to the viewer that something significant may be happening in terms of kingship. Henry tells Falstaff:

Presume not that I am the thing I was,
For God doth know, so shall the world perceive,
That I have turned away my former self. (v. 5. 56–58)

There is more here than a character 'turning over a new leaf'.²⁶ The clothing symbolism that recurs throughout the last act of the play is similar to that in fifteenth-century processions and reminds the audience of the process of coronation. It suggests, as fifteenth-century Londoners seem to have thought, 'clothes maketh the man'. Despite numerous clothing images, however, it is not the clothing here that makes the difference; the clothing is merely an outward representation of an inner

²⁶ *The First English Life*, ed. by Kingsford, p. liii, indicates that much of this speech is based on Ormonde's narrative (supposedly preserved in the *Gesta*), which is also adopted by Stow. Ormonde was born in 1392, and accompanied Henry V to France (*ibid.*, p. xvii).

change. Rather, it is Henry's choice. Unlike the kings of the London chronicles who were presented as being by their nature kings, and for whom all clothing was a deeply symbolic expression of their kingship, it is essentially Henry's choice in this play, which has him become a worthy king. The dichotomy between 'good king' and 'bad king' has been established through the speeches of the dying Henry IV and the Lord Chief Justice and the character of Falstaff, but in the end it is Henry who chooses to be one of these, not the clothing, the ceremony, or his birth that make him one.

Richard II also makes a choice. He states, clearly and comprehensively, that he believes kingship comes from God and can be taken only by God (III. 3. 71–89), an idea inherent in the fifteenth-century coronation ceremonies and processional pageants.²⁷ As the play of *Richard II* progresses, however, Richard becomes more and more aware of his humanity and less and less sure of his kingship. He strips away images of himself as king in order to discover himself as a man:

Cover your heads, and mock not flesh and blood
 With solemn reverence. Throw away respect,
 Tradition, form, and ceremonious duty,
 For you have but mistook me all this while.
 I live with bread, like you; feel want,
 Taste grief, need friends. Subjected thus,
 How can you say to me I am king? (III. 2. 167–73)

Identified in this speech are those things which 'make' a king — respect, tradition, form, and ceremonious duty. When Richard assents to Bolingbroke, he 'undoes' his kingship by giving up the balm, the crown, the oath, the sceptre — all that 'made' him a king at coronation (IV. 1. 191–209). The critical question here is whether an ordained king can ever be a man. Does a king have it within his power to cease being a king? Is a king who is no longer called King still a king?

What must the King do now? Must he submit?
 The King shall do it. Must he be deposed?
 The King shall be contented. Must he lose
 The name of King? A God's name, let it go (III. 3. 142–45)

The struggle here is to find what being a king really means. Is it inherent or is it made? The same questions arise for Shakespeare's Henry VI, who bemoans the fact that he has never known a life other than being a king:

²⁷ The pilgrimage movement of processions, the symbolic clothing of the king, and the use of the Jesse tree all enforce this idea. It is also a critical idea to underlie the entire tragedy cycle of the *Henry IV*, *Henry V*, *Henry VI*, and *Richard III* plays.

No sooner was I crept out of my cradle
 But I was made a king at nine months old.
 Was never subject longed to be a king
 As I do long and wish to be a subject. (2 *Henry VI*, IV. 8. 3–6)

Henry VI is presented as acutely aware of his absence of choices. He struggles to understand his nature as the person he is and the king that he must be. This is a poignant moment in the play, when Henry, in the midst of Cade's Rebellion, reminds us of his personal disempowerment, rather than empowerment, through being king. He is disempowered because he has never made a choice to be king, and yet knows himself only as king. When we remember Henry VI's procession through London described in MS 0. 9. 1, and that he was only nine years old at the time of that procession, we realize the reality that Henry was indeed always a king. He never knew himself in any other form. He was told time and time again what the nature of that kingship was — it was demonstrated to him by the people of London and by his own court and was taught to him in lessons. The drama in Shakespeare's *Henry VI* plays lies in the growing awareness as the plays progress that, while Henry's only identity is as king, his human nature is unsuited to that status. Richard, duke of York, identifies this when he returns from Ireland: 'I am far better born than is the King, | More like a king, more kingly in my thoughts' (2 *Henry VI*, v. 1. 28–29).

There is clearly a sense of what a king should be that is at work here, and that image of kingship is not so far removed from the ideal of fifteenth-century London. The difference, however, lies in the recognition that being a king does not necessarily make you a king. When Richard then learns that Somerset is not in prison, his immediate response is to again question the quality of Henry's kingship:

'King' did I call thee? No, thou art not a king;
 Not fit to govern and rule multitudes,
 Which dar'st not — no, nor canst not — rule a traitor. (v. 1. 93–95)

The question that emerges here, of course, is the nature of treachery as well as the nature of kingship. But there is also the issue of rule or be ruled, and from Richard's perspective Henry is ruled rather than ruling, despite his experience as always being king.

It is only by unravelling his identity as king that Henry's identity as a person can emerge. Ironically, Henry acts in his most kingly manner in 3 *Henry VI* only when he is no longer king. His challenge to Richard of Gloucester immediately before his death, provoked by his anger and despair at the death of his son, uses a strength of language not found elsewhere amongst Henry words (3 *Henry VI*, v. 6. 31–60).

Theatre as Metaphor

A second striking aspect of Shakespeare's writing in relation to kings is his sense of history as a story for the telling, the presentation of 'real life' as a pageant, and the consequent sense that all of history is in some way a play being played out upon the stage of the world.

After Richard II gives up his crown, the Abbott of Westminster laments the 'woeful pageant we have here beheld' (IV. 1. 320). Doing so, he intertwines the kingly presentation through pageant with the reality of the deposition. But as that 'reality' is in fact a play itself, which merely alludes to a real event, layers of presentation and reality become intermixed. The effect is that the audience is simultaneously asked to suspend disbelief and to realize the nature of the theatrical event they are witnessing. This is contrary to what is happening in the fifteenth-century processions when the enactment of good kingship effectively makes that kingship real in the streets of London.

When describing the aftermath of the deposition, the character of York makes a direct comparison between the stage and the world:

As in a theatre the eyes of men,
After a well-graced actor leaves the stage,
Are idly bent on him that enters next,
Thinking his prattle to be tedious,
Even so, or with much more contempt, men's eyes
Did scowl on gentle Richard. (v. 2. 23–28)

In the London chronicles the processional pageants are not representations of reality, they *are* reality, expressed through visual images. Shakespeare's kings, however, live in a world where everything can be likened to a play and where tragedies simply require a new actor or a change of scene to be reinterpreted. Most importantly, they live in a world where they are acutely aware of their role as actors in the great human drama. The very naming of the playhouse as The Globe reinforces this notion. Shakespeare's kings are actors acting as men acting as kings. The fifteenth-century kings, however, are kings being kings.

For Shakespeare's characters the reality of life is that it is action on a stage — the actual stage is acknowledged, as the playing space, but also as a metaphor for life. At the beginning of *Henry V* the chorus challenges the audience:

Can this cock-pit hold
The vasty fields of France? Or may we cram
Within this wooden O the very casques
That did affright the air at Agincourt? (*Prologue*, 11–14, emphasis added)

And so the prologue is continued, as the stage is set in the audience's imagination. The idea of space is played with even further in *Richard II*. Richard is alone on stage, supposedly in a cell, when he says:

I have been studying how I may compare
This prison where I live unto the world;
And for because the world is populous,
And here is not a creature but myself,
I cannot do it. Yet I'll hammer it out. (v. 5. 1–5)

The reality is that the actor playing Richard is surrounded by people and that his 'prison' is the stage, not a cell.²⁸ In fact, the speech takes Richard on an increasingly insular journey into his own psyche, while creating for the listening audience a picture of a populated world.

In fifteenth-century London the space in which pageants occur is the street. They are the showing of something real in the world. All of London was indeed the place of theatrical presentation. In Shakespeare's drama, however, the action takes place in an enclosed space — at the Temple Inn, at court, or in The Globe. There is a limited playing space, but that space becomes the world in the imagination of the viewing audience.

Making Comparisons

At this point it is helpful to make some direct comparisons between the ways that fifteenth-century chroniclers and Shakespeare, as an inheritor of their perceptions, presented kings. Fifteenth-century pageants are about moral action — even the movement through the street is a metaphor of pilgrimage, always leading to St Paul's or Westminster. Shakespeare, however, seems more concerned with moral dilemma. Although the questions are similar, the ways of exploring them are markedly different. Shakespeare's kings are concerned with the introspective — themselves in relation to the notion of kingship, rather than themselves being kings. Shakespeare's plays are about the process of self-recognition, whereas the London chroniclers are concerned with the process of presentation. The chronicles and the plays represent two different ways of understanding: Shakespeare uses language and reflection to explore ideas; the chroniclers record visual images to convey meaning.

²⁸ The idea of stage as prison is used again by Shakespeare at the end of *The Tempest*, when Prospero can only be released by the applause of the audience.

Nonetheless, the seeds of Shakespeare's moral dilemmas can be found in the London chronicles, in their accounts of the last procession made by Henry VI prior to his deposition. This last procession through London, apparently arranged by the court and lacking any pageantry, is recorded in *The Great Chronicle* as a disaster.²⁹

In this procession, the chronicler considers the shaft bearer to be more of a jester and the whole procession to be more like a play than the showing of a king. This comment indicates the chronicler's acknowledgement that the two forms of public show are dependent on the projection of images. However, there is clearly a distinction to be made in the chronicler's mind between the purpose and impact of plays and of processions as public performances. In a play the lack of unity between presentation and reality may be acceptable. In a procession, however, it is not.

Processions are perceived by the chroniclers as presenting a visual image of a spiritual reality — that the man appearing as king is the ordained inheritor of God's kingdom on earth. The London chroniclers believe that processions and pageants are concerned with presentation rather than representation — not with suggesting what is real, but with showing what is real. In the serious 'showing' of a prince, therefore, the chronicler is unprepared to accept an incompatibility between status and presentation. In this case, Henry's procession is 'more lyke a play' because his actual state as a man cannot be reflected in the images projected by procession.³⁰

This presentation of Henry is the only suggestion in the London chronicles of any disjuncture between being a king and being a man. This is not to say that London chroniclers liked all their kings — they did not. But their faults were not that they were men, but that they were bad kings. In the case of Henry the chroniclers struggle with his humanity — they believe that he was a good man, but they know that he was a poor king. The chroniclers could see this ambiguity, but they struggled to express it in words, and so relied upon describing the images evident in the procession. By the time Shakespeare is writing his history plays, however, the disjuncture between man and king has become the source of much of the drama.

What circumstances liberated Shakespeare to explore this concept in a way that the London chroniclers could not? I suggest that one very practical reason why

²⁹ MS Guildhall 3313, 1471. This is found in *The Great Chronicle*, ed. by Thomas and Thornley, p. 215.

³⁰ Another procession that is 'lyke a play' is Cade's procession through London when he mimics a royal procession. This is resonant of the world-turned-upside-down and twelfth night misrule, presented on the streets of London. The account of Cade in *3 Henry VI* follows the London chronicle accounts very closely and raises questions about the interaction of processions, 'truth', and drama.

Shakespeare's work can be dilemma-driven is the shift of drama to enclosed spaces.³¹ The audience can follow the character's thoughts because they can hear them. In the street theatre of fifteenth-century London long monologues do occur, but they are directed only at the honoured person. All other communication is visual. In one chronicle, comment is made that a particular actor spoke with a loud and clear voice and could be heard by many around, suggesting that this was usually not the case.³² However, in Shakespeare's plays, if you miss the words, you miss the drama. He makes no bones about this, telling people they must see certain scenes in the mind's eye. If you miss the words, you miss the relationships, the context, and most importantly, the dilemma.

This raises a chicken-and-egg question: did enclosed theatre open up the possibility for moral dilemma expressed through character, or did changes in the nature of drama require the move to enclosed spaces? The answer to this is intriguing because it opens up further questions about the relationship between space and thought, buildings and genre, and how far our cultural identity is shaped by, or shapes, our built environment.

There is at least one other crucial element at work here — community literacy. Between the welcome to Henry VI in 1432 and the performance of *2 Henry VI* in 1591 many Londoners of the merchant classes had become literate. These literate people of the sixteenth century were the grandchildren of the chroniclers and their associates. In the mid-fifteenth century literacy was a thing to be learned, but by the late sixteenth century it was a thing to be commanded. Is it possible that the introduction of literacy broadly across the community produced a heightened sensitivity to words? Did it create a stronger ability to debate and contextualize ideas? Did it allow people to explore ambiguity on a range of levels — as one becomes better at writing does one also become more able to explore and express ambiguity? And did the fact that reading could now be an isolated, rather than community, activity encourage people to become more introspective?³³

³¹ On the influence of space in producing Shakespeare, both then and now, see Jerzy Limon, 'From Liturgy to the Globe: The Changing Concept of Space', *Shakespeare Survey*, 52 (1999), 46–53; and Dennis Kennedy, 'Shakespeare Played Small: Three Speculations about the Body', *Shakespeare Survey*, 47 (1994), 1–13.

³² *The Great Chronicle*, 1502, ed. by Thomas and Thornley, p. 302. Similarly, in morality plays and miracle cycles, most people could follow these regardless. Even *Everyman's* moving final monologue can be guessed at in terms of content by the surrounding characters and the preceding action.

³³ The other major change between the writing of the London chronicles and Shakespeare is the Reformation. Clearly this changed ideas of God and human interaction and, presumably, of

Certainly, significant conceptual changes occurred over a period of 150 years. In order to appreciate Shakespeare's presentation of history and his use of sources it is important that we recognize the literary and social contexts in which he wrote. Rather than seeking his sources in a limited number of individual authors, we can look to the body of historical writing that existed in both manuscript and print, and which was nurtured by, and in turn nurtured, the growth of literacy in London during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. This allows us to make comparisons that open up new ways of understanding the intellectual shifts of the sixteenth century. In fifteenth-century London pageantry is about the display of realities and the demonstration of moral action. For Shakespeare the stage is the microcosm on which individual dilemmas are acted out. In the fifteenth century doing the action of a king was meant to make one a king. But in Shakespearean London doing the action of a king makes one only an actor. The chroniclers' kings are kings who are men, but Shakespeare's kings are actors acting as men acting as kings. And so Shakespeare does indeed make men out of kings, but he could do so only because the London chroniclers before him established and recorded a set of images against which both men and kings might be seen and see themselves.

the nature of humanity. It certainly resulted in critical engagement with certain religious teachings. However, it is difficult to imagine the Reformation taking place without the emergence of widespread literacy in the community. The Lollard emphasis on reading seems to support this link between literacy and Reformation.

INFORMING AUDIENCES: MARLOWE'S EARLY TRAGEDIES

Lucy Potter

From jiggling veins of rhyming mother-wits
And such conceits as clownage keeps in pay,
We'll lead you to the stately tent of War,
Where you shall hear the Scythian Tamburlaine
Threat'ning the world with high astounding terms
And scourging kingdoms with his conquering sword.
View but his picture in this tragic glass
And then applaud his fortunes as you please.¹

Most investigations of the ways in which Marlowe influenced early modern drama start with the Prologue to *1 Tamburlaine*, above, which, as Charles Whitney notes, 'promises a new reach of poetry, a new martial and tragic seriousness, a new challenge to order and degree, and a new respect and license of the audience's powers of judgement'.² These investigations show that *1 Tamburlaine* transformed the practices of the early modern theatre, informing both many of the plays that followed and audience responses to them: as Ruth Lunney asserts, 'after *Tamburlaine* nothing was ever the same in the playhouse'.³

¹ Christopher Marlowe, *Tamburlaine the Great: Parts 1 and 2*, ed. by J. S. Cunningham for the Revels Plays (London: Methuen, 1981), Prologue, lines 1–8. All references from both *Tamburlaine* plays are from this edition and subsequently given parenthetically in the text. References from Cunningham's introduction (pp. 1–105) are also given parenthetically in the text.

² Charles Whitney, *Early Responses to Renaissance Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 17.

³ Ruth Lunney, *Marlowe and the Popular Tradition: Innovation in the English Drama before 1595* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), p. 2.

While work on the informing properties of *1 Tamburlaine* encourages us to project our critical gaze forward to the plays that followed, it also raises a pressing question about the past: what informed *1 Tamburlaine* and produced a play of such theatrical novelty? In this essay, I investigate the question by examining *1 Tamburlaine* in relation to the play that precedes it in the Marlovian dramatic canon — *Dido, Queen of Carthage*.⁴

But is such an approach justified, given the many differences between these two plays? *Dido* is the only play Marlowe wrote ‘especially for performance in a “private” indoor theatre, such as the first Blackfriars, or at Court’ by a boy company (Oliver, p. xxx). *Dido* ends unhappily with the suicides of Dido, her sister Anna, and Dido’s former suitor, Iarbus. It seems that *Dido* received a less-than-rousing reception from its contemporary audience. Oliver notes in his introduction to the Revels edition that *Dido* ‘may be the play to which Henslowe refers in two entries in his *Diary* for 1598’, and that no records survive of ‘any one performance’ of the play by the Children of the Royal Chapel (p. xxxi). Anecdotal evidence from *Hamlet*, in an ‘almost certain allusion’ to *Dido*, also suggests that Marlowe’s play was rarely performed and that it went down rather badly with its contemporary audience (Oliver, p. xxxii): according to Hamlet, *Dido* ‘pleas’d not the million’, and if it was acted at all, there was no more than one performance.⁵ *1 Tamburlaine*, on the other hand, was ‘meant for’ a less exclusive theatre than *Dido* — an ‘inn or game house or outdoor space of some kind’ — and a less educated audience than that of the ‘private’ play (Cunningham, p. 24). *1 Tamburlaine* ends happily, with the all-conquering protagonist about to marry Zenocrate. The play was an ‘immediate theatrical success’, so much so that it spawned *2 Tamburlaine* (Cunningham, p. 1). The success of *1 Tamburlaine* in the light of *Dido*’s

⁴ Christopher Marlowe, *Dido Queen of Carthage*, ed. by H. J. Oliver (London: Methuen, 1968). Later references are from this edition and given parenthetically in the text. References from Oliver’s introduction (pp. xx–xlvii) are also given parenthetically in the text. In a recent article, Martin Wiggins disputes what he calls ‘the traditional assumption that *Dido, Queen of Carthage* was Marlowe’s first play’, proposing instead a date of 1588, after the *Tamburlaine* plays: ‘When Did Marlowe Write *Dido, Queen of Carthage*?’, *Review of English Studies*, 59 (2008), 521–41 (pp. 521, 541). Wiggins’s controversial claim remains, however (and in his own words), a ‘hypothetical story’ (p. 540). As I aim to demonstrate in this essay, there is clear textual evidence from which to argue that the *Dido* was indeed Marlowe’s first play.

⁵ William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, in *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. by G. Blakemore Evans, 2nd edn (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), II. 2. 434–36.

failure invites a consideration of *I Tamburlaine* as Marlowe's response to his 'box-office flop', *Dido*.⁶

What was it about *Dido* that the play's original audience did not like? There is a strong tradition of *Dido* criticism that maintains the play is a parody of Virgil's *Aeneid*, a 'fine farce', as Jackson I. Cope puts it.⁷ But if the audience found *Dido* funny, then surely the play would have enjoyed more popularity than the records indicate. One of the propositions I consider in this essay is that *Dido* is not a parody of the *Aeneid* but a serious exercise in generic transformation, one in which the audience play a crucial role. I intend to demonstrate that *Dido* turns Virgil's epic into tragedy by staging Aristotle's theory of catharsis, coaching its original audience to experience a uniform reaction when the play ends, a response that in theory makes *Dido* a tragedy. As we shall see, *I Tamburlaine* dismantles *Dido*'s aesthetic framework, staging a different kind of catharsis: the didactic function of tragedy that in the period was theorized by Sir Philip Sidney. But catharsis does not work in *I Tamburlaine* to limit audience response, as the Aristotelian model staged in *Dido* does, telling us something about what Marlowe thought *Dido*'s audience did not like. Among others, Whitney has argued that *I Tamburlaine* 'marked a decisive turning point in freeing the theatre to represent and to experience both deeper feeling and more complex meaning'.⁸ I will argue that *I Tamburlaine*'s dismantling of *Dido* helped bring about this freedom.

The influence of *Dido* I am proposing has not been investigated before and sheds new light on both *Dido* and the *Tamburlaine* plays, and on the development of the Marlovian dramatic canon.⁹ It also contributes to our discussions about the relationship between world and stage in English Renaissance drama, calling

⁶ Richard Wilson, 'Tragedy, Patronage, and Power', in *The Cambridge Companion to Christopher Marlowe*, ed. by Patrick Cheney (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 207–30 (p. 209).

⁷ Jackson I. Cope, 'Marlowe's *Dido* and the Titillating Children', *English Literary Renaissance*, 4 (1974), 315–25 (p. 316).

⁸ Whitney, *Early Responses to Renaissance Drama*, p. 20. Also see Lunney, *Marlowe and the Popular Tradition*, p. 3, and Robert Watson, 'Tragedy', in *Cambridge Companion to English Renaissance Drama*, ed. by A. R. Braunmuller and Michael Hattaway, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 301–52, esp. p. 303.

⁹ Some of the arguments I make about *Dido* in this essay were recently published as Lucy Potter, 'Marlowe's *Dido* and the Staging of Catharsis', *AUMLA*, 107 (2007), 1–23. I am grateful for permission to use that material here. The connection between *Dido* and Plato's *Republic* I go on to make and my examination of the *Tamburlaine* plays and their relationship to *Dido* are new.

attention to the importance of the audience in determining the tragedies of the period. This essay begins with a brief introduction to Aristotle's catharsis, turning then to the ways in which *Dido* enacts catharsis to direct audience response, and thereby turn epic into tragedy. In the second section of the essay, I discuss the ways in which *I Tamburlaine* dismantles *Dido*'s aesthetic framework to enable a variety of audience responses, a process that concludes in Zenocrate's death and Tamburlaine's treatment of her body in Part 2.

Aristotle first mentions catharsis in the *Poetics* in the definition of tragedy in Chapter 6. Ingram Bywater translates the passage as follows:

A tragedy, then, is the imitation of an action that is serious and also, as having magnitude, complete in itself; in language with pleasurable accessories, each kind brought in separately in the parts of the work; in a dramatic, not in a narrative form; with incidents arousing pity and fear, wherewith to accomplish its catharsis of such emotions.¹⁰

The problem with the passage is that Aristotle does not define catharsis. The lack of definition has led to centuries of debate about what catharsis means.¹¹ In Marlowe's time, the catharsis debate was propelled by the recovery and exegesis of the *Poetics* by Italian literary theorists and poets: as Baxter Hathaway argues, it was the Italian literary theorists who 'brought the principle [of catharsis] back into play and worked out most of the interpretations that have been used since their time'.¹² Chief among the many meanings that catharsis had for the Italian theorists is the medical or therapeutic meaning: catharsis is the 'purgation' of the audience's emotions of pity and fear. In criticism since Marlowe, it is a meaning attributed largely to Jacob Bernays, who translates the catharsis clause in the *Poetics* as follows: 'By (arousing) pity and fear tragedy achieves an alleviating relief of such (pitiful and

¹⁰ Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. by Ingram Bywater (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909), p. 17. All references are from the page numbers of Bywater's translation and subsequently given parenthetically in the text.

¹¹ In antiquity, as Amélie Oksenberg Rorty explains, there were three main forms of catharsis — medical, religious, and cognitive — all three forms of which 'are meant, at their best, to conduce to the proper functioning of a well-balanced soul': 'The Psychology of Aristotelian Tragedy', in *Essays on Aristotle's Poetics*, ed. by Amélie Oksenberg Rorty (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), pp. 1–22 (p. 14). Stephen Halliwell offers an excellent overview of the main modern definitions of catharsis in an appendix to his *Aristotle's Poetics* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), pp. 350–56. For an examination of the history of catharsis in literature, see Adnan K. Abdulla, *Catharsis in Literature* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985).

¹² Baxter Hathaway, *The Age of Criticism: The Late Renaissance in Italy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962), p. 300.

fearful) mental affections.¹³ Bernays presented his interpretation of catharsis in 1857, but critics agree that it originated in the literary theorizing of sixteenth-century Italy.¹⁴ In almost all the Italian accounts, catharsis is connected to what Daniel Javitch calls the 'ethico-rhetorical' function of tragedy — the argument that the experience of tragedy is in some way conducive to virtue.¹⁵ In Aeneas's narrative to Dido in Act II, scene 1 there is evidence to suggest that Aeneas enacts the therapeutic interpretation of catharsis, but without the ethico-rhetorical function that normally attends it in the literary theory of the period. As I aim to show, Aeneas's performance of catharsis effects the reversal of his fortunes, enabling him to return to the epic quest he is assigned in Virgil's text.¹⁶ As importantly, Aeneas's catharsis is also a rehearsal of it, a model that coaches the play's audience to respond to *Dido* as Aeneas does to his narrative.

To demonstrate the ways in which Aeneas's catharsis informs the response of *Dido*'s audience, I examine the kinds of emotions Aeneas's tale excites and the effect that telling the tale has on him. Then I discuss what happens to the Carthaginian queen after the narrative. Together with the effect the narrative has on Aeneas, Dido's reversal of fortune pressures the audience to adopt Aeneas's catharsis as their response to the play proper.

¹³ Jacob Bernays, 'Aristotle on the Effect of Tragedy', in *Articles on Aristotle*, ed. by Jonathan Barnes, Malcolm Schofield, and Richard Sorabji, 4 vols (London: Duckworth, 1979), IV, 154–65 (p. 162) (parentheses in original). Throughout his essay, Bernays (p. 156 and passim) draws support for his interpretation of catharsis from Aristotle's use of the term in the discussion of music in *Politics* 8. 7. The passage in the *Politics* is often used to define what catharsis means in the *Poetics*, although the strategy is not without its critics. See, for example, Richard McKeon, 'Literary Criticism and the Concept of Imitation in Antiquity', in *Critics and Criticism: Ancient and Modern*, ed. by R. S. Crane (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), pp. 147–75 (p. 166).

¹⁴ See, for example, Ingram Bywater, 'Milton and the Aristotelian Definition of Tragedy', *Journal of Philology*, 27 (1901), 267–75.

¹⁵ Daniel Javitch, 'The Assimilation of Aristotle's *Poetics* in Sixteenth-Century Italy', in *Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, ed. by Glyn P. Norton, 9 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), III, 53–65 (p. 54).

¹⁶ I do not see the return of Marlowe's Aeneas to his epic mission as an ethico-rhetorical effect of his catharsis. In any case, Virgil's Aeneas is not the unproblematic *pious* hero he is often thought to be, and not just in the first four books of the poem. For example, in revenge for Pallas's death in *Aeneid* 10, Aeneas sacrifices eighty enemy youths and with a 'pitiless heart' kills many others, including a priest (lines 517–604). M. Owen Lee calls Aeneas's sudden act of vengeance 'the act of a savage': *Fathers and Sons in Virgil's Aeneid: Tum Genitor Natum* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1979), p. 85. The seminal work on the 'dark side' of the *Aeneid* is W. R. Johnson, *Darkness Visible: A Study of Virgil's Aeneid* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976).

Although Aristotle does not tell us what catharsis means, he does nominate pity and fear as the emotions 'proper' to the tragic pleasure (*Poetics*, p. 39).¹⁷ Pity and fear inform Aeneas's 'woeful' tale, first, in the character of Pyrrhus, who does not show the emotions 'proper' to tragedy (II. 1. 114). Pyrrhus's treatment of Priam is a compelling example of the Myrmidon's lack of pity and fear. Defeated in battle, Priam holds up his hands to beg for mercy. The pitiless Pyrrhus, 'not mov'd at all', cuts them off (II. 1. 240). Pyrrhus's next action — the 'ripping' of Priam from navel to throat — is so appalling it moves even a statue of Jove to express disapproval (II. 1. 255). But Pyrrhus does not fear the sign of divine censure. He continues 'undaunted', celebrating the slaughter of Priam and then viewing, 'stone still, the fire wherewith rich Ilion burnt' (II. 1. 259–64). The image of an unmoved Pyrrhus in contrast to Jove's moving statue suggests that the events Aeneas describes should excite the pity and fear Pyrrhus never shows. They do not in Pyrrhus but they do in Aeneas.

Aeneas is able to express the emotions that Pyrrhus lacks. He fears his memory of the events his narrative describes and does not want to tell the story at all, at least not to Dido (II. 1. 106, 118). In addition, Aeneas's memory of the 'undaunted Pyrrhus' implies that he feared the sign of divine disapproval that did not move the Myrmidon. Aeneas expresses his pity as grief. He recalls weeping at the appearance of Hector's ghost, in particular at the sight of the injuries caused by Pyrrhus's father, the 'pitiless' Achilles described by Virgil (II. 1. 205).¹⁸ From here the 'sad tale' becomes Aeneas's lament, and the basis for Marlowe's staging of catharsis to both limit the response of *Dido*'s audience and turn Virgil's epic into tragedy (II. 1. 125).

¹⁷ Here I am following Bywater (p. 51) and critics in agreement with him, who distinguish Aristotle's use of catharsis in the definition of tragedy from what the term means when it is used in *Poetics* 17, where it describes the religious purification that brings about Orestes' salvation in Euripides' *Iphigenia in Tauris*. The main exception to this critical tradition is Gerald Else, who proposes that catharsis, throughout the *Poetics*, is a matter of structure in *Aristotle's Poetics: The Argument* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957), pp. 436–50. Support for Else's interpretation is rare. A notable exception from the field of literary criticism is Stephen Orgel in, for example, *The Authentic Shakespeare: And Other Problems of the Early Modern Stage* (New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 131–32. Orgel errs, however, in his reading of *Poetics* 17, attributing the *Iphigenia* to Sophocles rather than Euripides and proposing that Electra rather than Iphigenia recognizes Orestes (p. 132). I apply Else's model of catharsis more thoroughly to *Dido* elsewhere: Potter, 'Marlowe's *Dido* and the Staging of Catharsis'.

¹⁸ Virgil, *Aeneid*, trans. by H. R. Fairclough, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1934; repr. 1996), 1. 30. All references are from this edition and subsequently given parenthetically in the text. All translations are my own.

As the story progresses, Aeneas becomes overwrought: he grieves for Trojan citizens the Greeks did not pity — for ‘infants swimming in their parents’ blood’, for virgins ‘flung on a ring of pikes’, and for old men ‘kneeling for mercy to a Greekish lad | Who with steel pole-axes dash’d out their brains’ (II. 1. 193–99). Aeneas also laments Priam and Hecuba and, briefly, the loss of his wife, Creusa. In fact, he is so full of grief that he cannot stop the expression of it, despite Dido’s impassioned plea for him to ‘end’ in the middle of describing Priam’s death (II. 1. 243). To drive the point home, Marlowe embellishes the *Aeneid*, adding Polyxena’s death and the abortive attempt to rescue Cassandra so that Aeneas can pity the two women as well (II. 1. 274, 286). These additions to Virgil’s text leave the play’s audience in no doubt about Aeneas’s capacity for grief or about his emotional ‘fullness’ in comparison to the brutal, unmoved Pyrrhus. Aeneas has what we might call a ‘cathartic prerogative’: the ability to respond to tragedy with the emotions ‘proper’ to it.

A pitiful and fearful Aeneas is an imperative demanded by the *Aeneid* because the role of ‘father Aeneas’ is that of midwife to the birth of an ‘infant Troy’, which will replace and supersede the Troy destroyed by Pyrrhus (*Aeneid*, 1. 580; 10. 27). *Dido*’s attempts to limit the response of its original audience depend on a connection between the audience and Marlowe’s re-presentation of Virgil’s Aeneas, as I will go on to show. Yet the additions to Virgil’s text by which Marlowe establishes Aeneas’s difference from Pyrrhus and, indeed, Aeneas’s emotional fullness have led a number of critics to argue that Marlowe parodies Virgil’s hero by representing an Aeneas who is emotionally excessive.¹⁹ Interpretations of Aeneas’s narrative as either serious or comically excessive foreground the difficulties inherent in the artistic representation of extreme emotion, in this case, Aeneas’s *pathos*. The main problem is that Aeneas’s tragic agony *is* emotionally intense, so much so that it lays itself open to being parodied, or becoming a parody of tragic suffering that turns tragedy into melodrama. I suggest that Aeneas’s narrative is a manipulation not of tragedy to create melodrama but of the reverse; Marlowe, aware of the potential for melodrama in the narrative, turns it into a tragedy by staging Aeneas’s cathartic expulsion of the emotions the tale moves.²⁰ And Aeneas

¹⁹ See, for example, Rick Bowers, ‘Hysterics, High Camp, and *Dido Queene of Carthage*’, in *Marlowe’s Empery: Expanding his Critical Contexts*, ed. by Sara Munson Deats and Robert A. Logan (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2002), pp. 95–106.

²⁰ I am grateful to an anonymous reader of ‘Marlowe’s *Dido* and the Staging of Catharsis’ for directing my attention to, and offering helpful suggestions about, Aeneas’s narrative and the difficulties of representing extreme emotional suffering.

is very much moved by the story he tells, to the extent that he cannot finish it: 'sorrow hath tir'd [Aeneas] quite' and Achates, in Aeneas's stead, ends the tale (II. 1. 293). Aeneas's inability to finish the story seems to me indicative of the struggle to represent tragedy adequately through language, that is, of the silence towards which tragedy tends. The tale has aroused Aeneas's pity and fear, he has expressed these emotions in telling it, and now he is emotionally exhausted. Aeneas's pity and fear, and the movement of his narrative towards silence, turn the tale into a tragedy, and Aeneas responds with the emotions 'proper' to that genre.

The difference we see in Aeneas before and after his narrative suggests that Aeneas expels the emotions his tale arouses. The change in Aeneas also shows that the kind of catharsis Aeneas experiences is the therapeutic one normally attributed to Jacob Bernays. As Gerald Else explains, in Bernays's interpretation "catharsis" is a purgation, accompanied by a pleasurable sense of relief, from accumulating emotional tendencies, especially tendencies to pity and fear, which would otherwise poison our mental health'.²¹ The following passages illustrate the Bernaysian catharsis Aeneas experiences, which 'purges' him of the emotions his narrative excites. The first passage is Aeneas's description of the 'passions in [his] head' that disturb him before he tells his tale (II. 1. 3):

Achates, though mine eyes say this is stone,
Yet thinks my mind that this is Priamus;
And when my grieved heart sighs and says no,
Then would it leap out to give Priam life.
O, were I not at all, so thou mightst be!
Achates, see, King Priam wags his hand;
He is alive; Troy is not overcome! (II. 1. 24–30)²²

This next passage is Aeneas's description of the joy he experiences after he tells the tale:

O, how these irksome labours now delight
And overjoy my thoughts with their escape!
Who would not undergo all kind of toil
To be well stor'd with such a winter's tale? (III. 3. 56–59)

Aeneas is mentally unstable and emotionally burdened before the narrative, but after he tells it, his fantasy-producing 'passions' completely disappear from the play. Significantly, the action is the same (Aeneas is hunting) and the stage space is the

²¹ Else, *Aristotle's Poetics*, p. 225, note.

²² Also see Marlowe, *Dido*, II. 1. 7–9, pp. 15–22.

same. But Aeneas is not the same as he was before his narrative because he is no longer burdened with the weight of an untold tragedy. Aeneas's narrative is, then, a tragedy-within-a-tragedy in which a catharsis is played out before the play proper has ended. The narrative is also an interior play in which Aeneas substitutes for the play's exterior audience and rehearses for them a model of how to respond to tragedy.

Dido pressures its audience to experience Aeneas's catharsis in a number of ways, one of which is the authoritative weight the *Poetics* gives Aeneas's catharsis. Although Aeneas's catharsis may seem more Bernaysian than Aristotelian, the *Poetics* is still the source, as is borne out in the narrative's engagement with Aristotle's idea of the 'better poet'. At the beginning of Chapter 14, Aristotle says:

The tragic fear and pity may be aroused by the Spectacle; but they may also be aroused by the very structure and incidents of the play — which is the better way and shows the better poet. The Plot in fact should be so framed that, even without seeing the things take place, he who simply hears the account of them shall be filled with horror and pity at the incidents; which is just the effect that the *mere recital* of the story of *Oedipus* would have on one. (*Poetics*, p. 39; my emphasis)²³

Or, one might add, the effect that Aeneas's recital of the fall of Troy has on one. Thus, Aeneas's narrative stages not only catharsis but also Aristotle's preference for recited rather than performed tragedy, inviting *Dido*'s audience to take Aeneas's experience seriously as a model for their own response. When we come to *I Tamburlaine*, we shall see that the informing power of the Aristotelian poetics in *Dido* is dismantled to encourage the range of responses *Dido* tries to restrict.

When *Dido* deploys catharsis to realign Aeneas with the hero of Virgil's text, the pressure for the audience to adopt Aeneas's catharsis starts to build. As Margot Hendricks notes, Aeneas, before he tells his tale, is 'a man so consumed by personal grief that he is virtually immobilized'.²⁴ The epic that Aeneas embodies has also come to a grinding halt. Before the narrative, Aeneas does not even know who he is: as he tells Dido, 'Sometime I was a Trojan, mighty Queen; | But Troy is not; what shall I say I am?' (II. 1. 75–76). But after the narrative, Aeneas's fortunes change: Hermes appears in a dream to show Aeneas the path to Italy and a future in 'fame's immortal house' (IV. 3. 1). Aeneas is now committed to epic business, a commitment the play confirms by using Virgil's Latin: '*Desine meque tuis incendere*

²³ This is the second time in the *Poetics* that Aristotle denigrates the spectacle. The first is in Chapter 6 (*Poetics*, p. 23).

²⁴ Margot Hendricks, 'Managing the Barbarian: *The Tragedy of Dido, Queen of Carthage*', *Renaissance Drama*, 23 (1992), 165–88 (p. 169).

teque querelis; | Italiam non sponte sequor' (*Dido*, v. 1. 139–40; *Aeneid*, 4. 360).²⁵ Aeneas leaves soon after, escaping from both Dido and *Dido*, to pursue the course mapped out for him in Virgil's text.

Through the difference we see in Aeneas before and after his narrative, the play demonstrates that the mobilization of Aeneas/epic in *Dido* is made possible by Aeneas's cathartic purgation of the emotions his tale excites. If Aeneas had not been purged of these tragic emotions, he would remain the 'immobilized' figure Hendricks notes, stuck in *Dido*. But via his catharsis, Aeneas is set free to found the 'empire without end' promised in the *Aeneid*, an empire that Tudor ideology appropriated for itself (*Aeneid*, 1. 279). In the Elizabethan *translatio imperii* the centre of that endless empire was London, the new Troy, where *Dido*'s contemporary audience are watching Marlowe's play. The play's audience have a mythical connection to the Aeneas who leaves Dido/*Dido*, a connection that combines with the authority of the *Poetics* to limit the audience's response to *Dido* to the catharsis Aeneas experiences.²⁶

What happens to the Carthaginian queen puts further pressure on *Dido*'s audience to take Aeneas's catharsis seriously and adopt it as their response. Like Aeneas, Dido is moved by the narrative, so moved in fact that she tries twice to stop Aeneas from telling it — in the middle of the description of Priam's death, and after the account of Polyxena's sacrifice (II. 1. 243, 289). Queen Dido's passionate interjection that Aeneas 'end' in the middle of Pyrrhus's degrading treatment of King Priam is another evocation of the *Poetics*, for as Aristotle tells us, 'pity is occasioned by undeserved misfortune, and fear by that of one like ourselves' (*Poetics*, p. 35). And like Aeneas, Dido is emotionally tired when the narrative ends, admitting to 'melancholy thoughts' caused by a 'ruthful tale' (II. 1. 302). To distract her from the emotions the narrative has aroused, Dido 'think[s] upon some pleasing sport' (II. 1. 302). But what happens to Dido after the tale is not the same as what happens to Aeneas. Dido suggests a passionate response to the narrative, but there is no textual evidence that she experiences a catharsis of the emotions it excites. The 'pleasing sport' upon which Dido thinks is the hunt in Act III the emotionally purged Aeneas enjoys. There are no such benefits for Dido. Her experience of the

²⁵ 'Cease to inflame both you and me with your laments. I do not seek Italy of my own free will.'

²⁶ Lisa Hopkins has discussed Aeneas as the founder of Marlowe's Britain 'mythically, through Brut, and historically, both through the literal Roman conquest of the island and the metaphorical conquest of its literary allegiances to classical learning': "'And shall I die and this unconquered?": Marlowe's Inverted Colonialism', *Early Modern Literary Studies*, 2 (1996), 1–23 (p. 18).

narrative produces fantasies like those that tormented Aeneas before his narrative, fantasies which climax in her hallucination that Aeneas returns:

Now is he come on shore safe, without hurt;
 But see, Achates wills him put to sea,
 And all the sailors merry make for joy;
 But he, rememb'ring me, shrinks back again;
 See where he comes; welcome, welcome, my love! (II. 1. 257–61)²⁷

In effect, the destabilizing effects of unexpressed tragedy have been transferred from Aeneas to Dido. Thus, in the play's second half, it is Dido rather than Aeneas who is immobilized, and instead of queen, she wants to be 'a second Helena' and 'live a private life' with Aeneas (V. 1. 148, 198). Then, Dido becomes a second Eve when she mistakes Aeneas for the serpent in the Garden of Eden:

O serpent that came creeping from the shore
 And I for pity harbour'd in my bosom,
 Wilt thou now slay me with thy venom'd sting,
 And hiss at Dido for preserving thee? (V. 1. 165–68)

Dido's pity is a mark of transgression that stands in stark contrast to Aeneas's pity as a signifier of his epic transcendence. More importantly, Aeneas's performance of catharsis has effected the reversal of Dido's fortunes as well as his own, cautioning the audience about what happens to characters that do not have the cathartic prerogative Aeneas enjoys.

As a 'second Helena', the cause of Troy's fall, Dido comes to embody the tragedy Aeneas's narrative describes. Like Aeneas's memory, Dido must be expelled from the text to enable the founding of an endless empire. But Dido's death does not end Marlowe's play; the suicides of Iarbus and Anna do. This radical departure from *Aeneid* 4 paradoxically serves to promote the ideology of Virgil's epic, and is another of the play's attempts to direct the audience's response via their mythical connection to 'father Aeneas'. Iarbus shares Dido's fate because his wish to be 'some poisonous beast' with an 'edged sting' is a reconfiguration of Dido's misrepresentation of Aeneas-as-serpent, a reconfiguration that feminizes Iarbus through Dido and her connection — now his connection — to Eve (IV. 1. 21). Anna's death is more significant than Iarbus's because it eradicates all possibility that matrilineal rule will survive Dido's death. The play thereby anticipates, as the *Aeneid* does, an elsewhere empire founded by motherless men. This future begins in Aeneas's narrative, in the swift removal of Creusa, mother of Ascanius, in half

²⁷ Also see Marlowe, *Dido*, III. 1. 171–72 and III. 1. 264, 270–71.

a line (Il. 1. 270). By promoting Virgilian ideology, *Dido* makes catharsis the prerogative of both epic and *Dido*'s original audience, who are part of the endless empire Aeneas founds.

Aeneas's catharsis is crucial in *Dido*. His catharsis informs the play's plot, reversing both his and Dido's fortunes, and it works hard to inform the audience's response. Effectively, *Dido* works hard to position its audience as the homogeneous one the *Poetics* assumes because the response Aeneas's catharsis pressures the audience to experience is a uniform one, and the play's contemporary audience are alike in their mythical connection to Aeneas. The Marlovian project of turning epic into tragedy by limiting the audience's response to *Dido* depends on the *Poetics*, so much so that the play engages with the ancient quarrel about tragedy, between Plato and Aristotle, in which the *Poetics* is involved. This engagement is yet another way in which *Dido* tries to direct audience response.

Scholars agree that the *Poetics* in general and the idea of catharsis in particular were formulated as a defence of tragedy against Plato's attack, largely in Book 10 of the *Republic*. As Stephen Halliwell explains, the basis of Plato's objections is that 'works of art do not themselves constitute the reality which they betoken or show'.²⁸ Plato's greatest quarrel is with tragedy because of, as Sheila Murnaghan notes, its 'power to recreate in its audience the undesirable experiences it imitates' through the emotions it arouses.²⁹ For instance, Plato argues:

It is likewise true in the case of erotic desire, and anger, and all the cravings, pains and pleasures in the soul which we agree attach themselves to every action of ours, that such is the effect which poetic representation works on us. For it waters and nourishes these feelings, when they ought to be dried up, and it puts them in control of us, when *they* are the things that ought to be controlled if we are to become better and happier people, not worse and more miserable. (*Republic*, p. 69)

Dido engages Plato's objections in Aeneas's stoic resolution to tell the narrative to Dido, even though it causes him intense emotional pain. Like 'pale death's stony mace', the tragedy of Troy 'beats forth [Aeneas's] senses' and makes him 'sink at Dido's feet' (Il. 1. 115). Still, Aeneas tells it, but only after a prefatory warning to an onstage audience, Dido and other Carthaginians, a warning that the offstage audience hear as well:

²⁸ Stephen Halliwell, *Plato: Republic 10* (Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 1988), p. 7. All references to the *Republic* are from the page numbers of Halliwell's translation and subsequently given parenthetically in the text.

²⁹ Sheila Murnaghan, 'Sucking the Juice Without Biting the Rind: Aristotle and Tragic Mimesis', *New Literary History*, 26 (1995), 755–73 (p. 759).

Then speak, Aeneas, with Achilles tongue,
 And, Dido, and you Carthaginian peers,
 Hear me, but yet with Myrmidons' harsh ears,
 Daily inur'd to broils and massacres,
 Lest you be mov'd too much with my sad tale. (II. 1. 121–25)

In these lines, Aeneas seems to agree with Plato that tragedy represents material capable of 'nourishing' emotions to an uncontrollable level. Yet Aeneas is himself 'mov'd too much' by the tragedy his tale recounts; if he weren't, he would not be capable of the cathartic experience that returns him to his epic quest. When we take the benefits of Aeneas's catharsis into account — the removal of overwhelming, crippling passions and the remobilization of epic business — we become aware that *Dido* glosses Plato's argument: tragedy 'nourishes' emotions to an uncontrollable level but *only in certain audiences*, not in Aeneas. To put it another way, tragedy is inherently problematic, as Plato maintains, but the problem inheres in who hears it, not in the artistic representation per se. *Dido* tells us who this certain audience is. It cannot be Venus, or Achates and Ascanius, because Aeneas wanted to tell them the tale before Dido forces it out of him (I. 1. 245–48; II. 1. 23–38; II. 1. 120). Clearly, Aeneas is not worried about the effect his narrative might have on them. But as his prefatory warning tells us, Aeneas *is* worried about his narrative's effect on the Carthaginian audience, Dido in particular. It appears that Aeneas's narrative has an ideal audience, those auditors/spectators who, like Aeneas, are able to control the emotions tragedy excites. The Carthaginian queen is not part of that audience within the play, but *Dido's* contemporary audience, watching the performance of Aeneas's narrative and the play itself in new Troy/London, already are. In positioning the audience as both the homogeneous one the *Poetics* assumes and tragedy's ideal audience, *Dido* seems to expect from its contemporary audience the catharsis Aeneas models.

It may have been the sixteenth-century Italian theorists and poets who brought catharsis 'back into play', but in *Dido*, it was Marlowe who brought catharsis back into *the* play. And by staging catharsis to gloss Plato's objections to tragedy, Marlowe accepts Plato's invitation for a defence/defender of tragedy to come forth, but not in the forms Plato dictates: the defence of tragedy staged in *Dido* is in verse, not prose, and it comes from a practising poet, not a mere lover of poetry (*Republic*, p. 71). With *Dido's* contribution to the quarrel about tragedy in mind, I propose that *Dido* is a Renaissance defence of tragedy, one that enters the discourse of literary criticism as a revised *Poetics*. The full authoritative weight of the *Poetics* is brought to bear on *Dido* and its project of generic metamorphosis. Aristotle's text informs *Dido*, producing a play that reflects theory to direct the response of its audience to that of a character on the stage, and thereby turn epic into tragedy.

The theoretical possibilities that *Dido* enacts may or may not have succeeded. And while *Dido* may not have been popular, this does not mean it failed to meet its theoretical objectives. Whatever happened, the audience did not seem to want any more plays like *Dido* from Marlowe. And Marlowe never wrote another play for the private theatre, instead turning his attention to the public stage with *I Tamburlaine*. Robert Logan argues that *I Tamburlaine* shows a Marlowe 'eager to test fresh ideas for innovation in genre, language, and dramaturgical technique'.³⁰ *Dido* — the dismantling of it — is an important part of Marlowe's recipe for a new kind of drama, as we shall see.

In this section of the essay, I discuss the ways in which Marlowe deploys *Dido* elements in *I Tamburlaine* to break down *Dido*'s aesthetic framework, and thereby encourage a range of responses from *I Tamburlaine*'s audience. The *Dido* elements in *I Tamburlaine* include parts of Aeneas's narrative, references to Virgil's *Aeneid*, and most important, catharsis. It is Zenocrate who voices a theory of catharsis in her lament for Bajazeth and Zabina in Act V. Yet the kind of catharsis Zenocrate expresses is not the same as the one that informs *Dido*. Nor does Zenocrate's expression of catharsis work to limit audience response, as it does in *Dido*. In *I Tamburlaine*, Marlowe stages a Sidneian catharsis to help fulfil the Prologue's promise of a tragedy the audience can see, hear, and interpret 'as [they] please'.

My discussion begins with an examination of some of the action that inspires Zenocrate's lament, action that re-presents *Dido* elements but departs from the theory behind it. Then I outline the main arguments in the *Apology* that Zenocrate's lament enlists and track her expression of them. Most importantly, I reveal the ways in which Zenocrate weakens the Sidneian theory she expresses, prefacing the collapse that follows of the restrictions *Dido* places on audience response, a collapse that reaches its logical conclusion in Zenocrate's death and Tamburlaine's treatment of her body in Part 2.

I Tamburlaine charts the rise and rise of the 'scourge and wrath of God, | The only fear and terror of the world' (III. 3. 44–45). The plot is simple and episodic, with 'violent act following upon violent act' as Tamburlaine rises to power.³¹ The

³⁰ Robert A. Logan, 'Violence, Terrorism, and War in Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* Plays', in *War and Words: Horror and Heroism in the Literature of Warfare*, ed. by Sara Munson Deats and others (Lanham: Lexington, 2004), pp. 65–82 (p. 68).

³¹ Lisa S. Starks, "'Won with thy words and conquered with thy looks": Sadism, Masochism, and the Masochistic Gaze in *I Tamburlaine*', in *Marlowe, History, and Sexuality: New Critical Essays on Christopher Marlowe*, ed. by Paul Whitfield White (New York: AMS Press, 1998), pp. 179–94 (p. 179).

violence of *I Tamburlaine* climaxes in the sacking of Damascus, and the deaths of Bajazeth and Zabina in Act V, scene 1. Zenocrate's description of the ruined Damascus resembles the fall of Troy as Aeneas describes it in *Dido*, with its 'streets strowed with dis severed joints of men | And wounded bodies gasping yet for life' (I. 5. 323–24). The similarity is made more striking by the 'hoisting up' of a troop of 'heavenly virgins and unspotted maids' on the lances of Tamburlaine's horsemen (I. 5. 325). The virgins were sent by the Governor of Damascus to beg Tamburlaine for mercy, a plea that, like Aeneas's narrative, is loaded with references to the emotions 'proper' to the tragic pleasure, pity and fear (I. 5. 74). Tamburlaine, like Pyrrhus, is unmoved; the virgins are 'shown' death, and their 'slaughtered carcasses' hung on Damascus's walls for all to see (I. 5. 129, 131). While the scene is reminiscent of Aeneas's narrative, the theory that informs it is not: the virgins' bodies make visible to characters on the stage the violence that Aeneas's narrative describes. In other words, the spectacle works against the Aristotelian preference for recited tragedy that informs Aeneas's tale, evoking *Dido* to show a theoretical difference from it. Zenocrate calls the sight a 'most accursed' one, but more is to come (I. 5. 325). There is another 'bloody spectacle' (I. 5. 340): the dead Bajazeth and Zabina, who have brained themselves in full view of the play's offstage audience. Overwhelmed by the sight, Zenocrate pours out her grief in a lament that expresses, but also questions, the didactic function of *de casibus* tragedy that Sidney proposes in the *Apology*.

In Sidneian theory, the audience of *de casibus* tragedy draw a moral lesson from the drama's representation of the fall of the mighty at the turn of Fortune's wheel. As Sidney puts it, tragedy is that which, 'with stirring the affects of admiration and commiseration, teacheth the uncertainty of this world, and upon how weak foundations gilden roofs are builded'.³² Geoffrey Shepherd comments that Sidney here inverts the Aristotelian emotions, explaining Sidney's admiration as 'a kind of emotional shock, the amazement felt in the face of an exceptionally heroic order of behaviour', and pointing out that the effect produced is a moral one (p. 189, note). For Sidney, tragedy has a particular educational value for the powerful because it is excessive; tragedy 'openeth the greatest wounds, and showeth forth the ulcers that are covered with tissue; that maketh kings fear to be tyrants, and tyrants manifest their tyrannical humours' (p. 117, 35–37). It is a function grounded in

³² Sir Philip Sidney, *An Apology for Poetry* [first published 1591], ed. by Geoffrey Shepherd (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1965), p. 118, lines 1–3. All references from the *Apology* are cited by page and line from this edition and subsequently given parenthetically in the text. References from Shepherd's introduction and notes are cited by page number only.

a moral *gnosis* and *praxis*, or as Sidney puts it, 'with the end of well-doing and not well-knowing only' (p. 104, 29–30). Stephen Orgel has shown that in the 'maketh kings fear to be tyrants' passage the tyrants in question are 'only stage tyrants' even though Sidney's syntax makes them identical to kings.³³ Sidneian theory supposes, then, a moral lesson learnt by the stage tyrant, one that 'manifests tyrannical humours'. *Gorbuduc*, a *de casibus* tragedy, is the only play that achieves the 'notable morality' Sidney seeks (p. 134, 3). While Marlowe may not have read the *Apology*, Zenocrate's lament is evidence that he knew some of the arguments it contained, arguments which were probably circulating at the time in other forms as well.³⁴ And perhaps Marlowe chose a Sidneian catharsis rather than an Aristotelian one because of the currency it seemed to have for *1 Tamburlaine's* audience. Indeed, a number of critics have examined Zenocrate's lament for Bajazeth and Zabina as a conventional response to *de casibus* tragedy.³⁵ Yet to be adequately recognized, however, is the extent to which the lament enfeebles the theory behind it, testing the power of catharsis to inform tragedy and limit audience response to it.

Zenocrate begins her lament by entreating the macrocosmic elements of earth and heaven to respond emotionally to the sight she sees, to 'weep' and 'shake [...] in sign of fear and grief' (I. 5. 349). Then she expresses her hope that Tamburlaine will be spared the fate of Bajazeth and Zabina. Her hope rests on Tamburlaine responding to the same sight with the Aristotelian emotions of pity and fear:

Ah Tamburlaine my love, sweet Tamburlaine,
That fightest for sceptres and for slippery crowns,
Behold the Turk and his great emperess!
Thou that in conduct of thy happy stars
Sleepest every night with conquest on thy brows
And yet wouldst shun the wavering turns of war,
In fear and feeling of the like distress
Behold the Turk and his great emperess! (I. 5. 353–60)

The line 'In fear and feeling of the like distress' distinguishes, as Aristotle does, a tragedy from a story that 'arouse[s] the human feeling in us': tragedy moves us specifically to pity and fear; 'pity is occasioned by undeserved misfortune, and fear

³³ Orgel, *Authentic Shakespeare*, p. 137.

³⁴ It is also possible that Marlowe knew Sidney's *Apology*. Although not published until after Sidney's death in 1586, the *Apology* enjoyed a 'fairly wide circulation' in several handwritten texts (Shepherd, p. 2), and Marlowe may have read one of them.

³⁵ See, for example, Sara Munson Deats, *Sex, Gender, and Desire in the Plays of Christopher Marlowe* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1997), p. 151.

by that of one like ourselves' (*Poetics*, p. 35). Yet Marlowe imbues the Aristotelian distinction with a Sidneian flavour because Zenocrate hopes that the spectacle will teach the stage tyrant Tamburlaine that he, too, is subject to the turn of Fortune's wheel.

More than hope is needed. In the second half of the lament, Zenocrate begins to question the function of tragedy she puts forward, picking at the seams that hold *Dido's* aesthetic fabric together. Zenocrate worries that the spectacle of violence will teach the tyrant Tamburlaine nothing, with potentially tragic consequences for him like those suffered by Bajazeth and Zabina. Tamburlaine needs more than the education *de casibus* tragedy provides. Indeed, no less than divine forgiveness, from a god and a prophet, is required if Tamburlaine is to escape the turn of Fortune's wheel:

Ah mighty Jove and holy Mahomet,
Pardon my love, O pardon his contempt
Of earthly fortune and respect of pity,
And let not conquest ruthlessly pursued
Be equally against his life incensed
In this great Turk and hapless emperess! (I. 5. 363–68)

In this section of the lament, Zenocrate loses confidence in the theory she proposes. She is unsure that the spectacle will engender in Tamburlaine either the *gnosis* or *praxis* which, in theory, the experience of *de casibus* tragedy produces. For while Zenocrate urges the two outcomes of *de casibus* tragedy as the condition of Tamburlaine's future survival, her plea for divine forgiveness betrays her doubt that it will actually happen.

It remains for Zenocrate to measure her own past actions against the outcomes of *de casibus* tragedy, to beg divine forgiveness for her lack of pity in the past, and to wonder at the fate that might await her because of it:

And pardon me that was not moved with ruth
To see them live so long in misery.
Ah what may chance to thee, Zenocrate? (I. 5. 370–72)

Zenocrate argues here that the sight she has interpreted as a *de casibus* tragedy would never have happened but for her lack of pity in the past. This suggests one of the moral outcomes of *de casibus* tragedy, a 'well-knowing' on Zenocrate's part that the 'bloody spectacle' has taught her. But the lament ends in uncertainty, with a question about whether a 'well-doing', either to Zenocrate or by her, will result from her experience of *de casibus* tragedy.

If Zenocrate's experience of Bajazeth and Zabina's tragedy effects a *praxis*, it is a curious one. She goes on to call herself a 'cursed object,' a kind of prop on

Tamburlaine's stage (I. 5. 414). Then, in a gloss of wishful classical thinking, Zenocrate imagines herself as the Lavinia of Virgil's epic, the victim of pre-ordained 'powers divine' forever beyond her control (I. 5. 414, 393). The Lavinia claim does not bode well, for in the *Aeneid*, Lavinia is the 'cause of great evil', and 'presages a mighty war' for her people (10. 480; 7. 80). That war has already happened in *I Tamburlaine* in the sacking of Damascus, Zenocrate's hometown. It seems that the lesson of *de casibus* tragedy comes too late to help either Zenocrate or her Latinum.

Zenocrate, of course, is not the stage tyrant who should learn tragedy's lesson. Nevertheless, her lament questions Aeneas's performance of catharsis in *Dido*, telling *I Tamburlaine*'s audience that catharsis does not always work in practice as it does in theory. Then Anippe, Zenocrate's maid, gives a different reading of the scene that reduces the lament to a rhetorical figure that does not work. Unlike Zenocrate, Anippe does not interpret the bodies of Bajazeth and Zabina as a didactic *exemplum*:

Madam, content yourself and be resolved
Your love hath Fortune so at his command
That she shall stay, and turn her wheel no more
As long as life maintains his mighty arm
That fights for honours to adorn your head. (I. 5. 373–77)

As Troni Grande points out, Anippe asserts that the dead Bajazeth and Zabina are evidence that Tamburlaine 'has seized control of fortune's wheel' in direct opposition to 'Zenocrate's charge that Tamburlaine holds "earthly fortune" in contempt'.³⁶ As a rhetorical figure, Zenocrate's lament fails to persuade even her maid.

Anippe is the only character on stage to hear Zenocrate's lament. Her rival interpretation demonstrates that the bodies of Bajazeth and Zabina do not have the fixed meaning of tragedy that Zenocrate assigns them.³⁷ Not everyone, it seems, recognizes the tragedy Zenocrate sees. Marlowe may be speculating here about why *Dido* flopped: perhaps, like Anippe, *Dido*'s audience did not see the tragedy being

³⁶ Troni Grande, *Marlovian Tragedy: The Play of Dilation* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1999), p. 50.

³⁷ In a landmark essay on theatrical literalization in the *Tamburlaine* plays, David Thurn examines Zenocrate's lament as an example of the play's 'violent reduction of meaning to the terms of sight': 'Sights of Power in *Tamburlaine*', *English Literary Renaissance*, 19 (1989), 3–21 (p. 3). He argues that other interpretations of the 'bloody spectacle' are possible because the scene produces an 'excess of signification' (p. 15), an excess I think Zenocrate tries to control by reading it as a *de casibus* tragedy.

made before their eyes. In any event, Anippe's interpretation demonstrates that the catharsis Zenocrate expresses neither fixes the meaning of the 'bloody spectacle' as a tragedy, nor informs Anippe's response to it. Responses to the scene other than the one Zenocrate gives are possible and do not necessarily lead, as Dido's non-cathartic response to Aeneas's narrative does, to catastrophe.

Then Tamburlaine enters and announces that the scene is not at all the *de casibus* tragedy Zenocrate imagines it to be. He interprets the tragedy Zenocrate sees as 'sights of power that grace [his] victory' (I. 5. 475). The multiple dead bodies are Tamburlaine's crowning glory as a stage tyrant, not the lesson Zenocrate hopes will make him fear to be one. Tamburlaine subsequently 'takes truce with all the world' and vows to entomb 'with honour' the bodies of Bajazeth and Zabina, and of Arabia, whose body has been added to the pile (I. 5. 530). Tamburlaine attributes the change in his behaviour to Zenocrate — 'She that hath calmed the fury of my sword' — but not for the reasons Zenocrate puts forth in her lament because Tamburlaine was not on stage to hear it (I. 5. 438). It seems that the 'notable morality' of *de casibus* tragedy is achieved at the end of *I Tamburlaine*, as Sidneian theory proposes it must, and yet it is the stage tyrant of tragedy's object lesson who achieves it. Tamburlaine's non-cathartic response to the Damascus episode makes a mockery of the theory of *de casibus* tragedy expressed in Zenocrate's lament. In the light of *Dido*'s aesthetic project and lack of popularity, Marlowe may be mocking himself, distancing himself from the aesthetic that underpins his first play.

Tamburlaine's 'sights of power' claim demolishes in one line the function of *de casibus* tragedy Zenocrate proposes, reducing to rubble *Dido*'s project of coaching the audience to experience a uniform response to tragedy. The claim enables and encourages a range of responses from the audience not only to the Damascus episode but also to tragedy itself, for in the absence of catharsis, *I Tamburlaine* / Tamburlaine achieves a conventionally comic conclusion in 'rites of marriage' to Zenocrate in the play's final line (I. 5. 535). As Richard Wilson notes, this is 'Marlowe's only happy ending',³⁸ and, indeed, it was as comedies that both *Tamburlaine* plays were originally entered in the Stationer's Register (Cunningham, p. 22). The part *Dido* plays in *I Tamburlaine* gives us new information about the way Marlowe achieved a comic conclusion in his second play, because Tamburlaine, who enables the comic ending, stands not only among the ruins of Damascus but also among the ruins of *Dido*'s aesthetics of tragedy.

³⁸ Wilson, 'Tragedy, Patronage, and Power', p. 214.

Cunningham calls the idea that the *Tamburlaine* plays are comedies a 'curious' one, going on to note that the plays' title page places equal emphasis on 'Tragicall Discourses' (p. 22). How did *1 Tamburlaine*'s audience respond to the play? As tragedy or comedy? Or as both? Richard Levin has demonstrated at some length that Tamburlaine 'evoked a positive response in the contemporary audience'.³⁹ In addition, Levin discovers contemporary allusions to an admonitory lesson in both *Tamburlaine* plays, one that 'is never derived from Tamburlaine's fate but always from the fates of his victims',⁴⁰ either Bajazeth in Part 1 or the harnessed kings in Part 2 (II. 4. 3). This is not to say the audience acted out the finer points of the lesson of *de casibus* tragedy after leaving the theatre. It suggests, however, that the audience knew the basic argument in Zenocrate's lament; the *de casibus* lesson just didn't apply to Tamburlaine. Marlowe gave them no reason why it should. Perhaps the audience saw Bajazeth in the 'tragic glass' the Prologue holds up, and the Tamburlaine of the play's comic ending reflected back. One thing is certain: the audience wanted more, and Marlowe 'penned' a second part to satisfy them.⁴¹ Cunningham asserts that 'there is no reason to doubt this' (p. 23).

Investigations of the reasons for *1 Tamburlaine*'s success draw attention to the ways in which the play empowers its audience. As Whitney notes, the play's 'contradictory framing devices', such as Zenocrate's lament and Tamburlaine's 'sights of power' claim, help empower the audience.⁴² Combined with the interpretative license bestowed by the Prologue, the contradictory framing devices also challenge audiences to 'invent responses' of their own, empowering them still more.⁴³ The freedom *1 Tamburlaine* allows its audience and the box-office success the play enjoyed stand in stark contrast to *Dido*'s aesthetic aims and lack of success. As we have seen, the dismantling of *Dido* informs the contradictory framing devices in Act V, scene 1. The absence of *Dido*'s theoretical project, then, is a factor in the genre and success of *1 Tamburlaine*, contributing to the 'penning' of *2 Tamburlaine*. Let me draw my arguments to a close with an examination of Zenocrate's function in Part 2, a function I suggest was informed by the audience's response to Part 1.

³⁹ Richard Levin, 'The Contemporary Perception of Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, 1 (1984), 51–70 (p. 54).

⁴⁰ Levin, 'Contemporary Perception of Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*', p. 61.

⁴¹ As reported in the Prologue to Marlowe, *2 Tamburlaine*, line 3.

⁴² Whitney, *Early Responses to Renaissance Drama*, p. 28. The phrase 'contradictory framing devices' is Lunney's (*Marlowe and the Popular Tradition*, p. 184).

⁴³ Whitney, *Early Responses to Renaissance Drama*, p. 28.

* * *

Zenocrate dies in Act II, scene 4 of *2 Tamburlaine*. Tamburlaine responds by firing 'the cursèd town' where she died. As the Prologue states, this is but one of many cities Tamburlaine 'sacrifices' to 'celebrate' Zenocrate's funeral (lines 7–8). Such celebrations continue for the rest of the play. Tamburlaine refuses to bury Zenocrate, instead embalming her body and placing it in a gold-lined coffin that he has dragged about with him for the rest of the play. At the moment of his death, Tamburlaine conceives a union with Zenocrate's dead body:

Now, eyes, enjoy your latest benefit,
And when my soul hath virtue of your sight,
Pierce through the coffin and the sheet of gold
And glut your longings with a heaven of joy. (II. 5. 224–27)

Part 2 ends twenty-six lines later, and was 'seemingly more popular' than Part 1.⁴⁴

Mark Thornton Burnett has convincingly argued that everything in Part 1 is 'ironized or pushed to a thematic extreme' in Part 2.⁴⁵ Zenocrate's death and Tamburlaine's treatment of her body seem to me indicative of the process Burnett notes in ways that conclude the dismantling of *Dido* begun in Part 1. There is a certain logic to Zenocrate's death that is the result of *1 Tamburlaine*'s popularity: alive, Zenocrate 'calm[ed] the fury' of Tamburlaine's sword, and so, to inspire Tamburlaine to more 'bloody spectacles' for the audience to judge as they please, Zenocrate dies. The dead Zenocrate is a reminder of the didactic catharsis she expressed in Part 1, but in the aesthetics of Part 2, she is also the inspiration for the violence her lament condemns. It is ironically appropriate that Tamburlaine 'celebrates' her death as he does, by sacking, as he did Damascus, as many cities as he can. And it is ironically appropriate, perversely so, that Tamburlaine should want to 'glut' himself on the dead Zenocrate and utterly consume with her dead body the theory of tragedy's function she expressed in *1 Tamburlaine*. As Part 1 shows, the function of *de casibus* tragedy does not apply to Tamburlaine. Marlowe gives the audience of *2 Tamburlaine* the end *1 Tamburlaine* empowered them enough to want, largely by dismantling *Dido*: an end to judge as they please, this time without the *de casibus* function Zenocrate's lament expresses because it does not apply to Tamburlaine's fortunes. To my mind, the final irony of *2 Tamburlaine* is that Tamburlaine's

⁴⁴ Thomas Cartelli, *Marlowe, Shakespeare, and the Economy of Theatrical Experience* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), p. 69.

⁴⁵ Mark Thornton Burnett, 'Tamburlaine the Great, Parts 1 & 2', in *Cambridge Companion to Christopher Marlowe*, ed. by Cheney, pp. 127–43 (p. 127).

desire to 'glut' himself on Zenocrate's dead body draws the curtain on his violent stage. To put it another way, only when catharsis is dead and about to be digested do the 'bloody spectacles' of tragedy end. In terms of *Dido*'s theoretical project, this is a logical conclusion to *1 Tamburlaine*'s dismantling of *Dido*.

Dido and the *Tamburlaine* plays test the limits of dramatic theory to inform both the tragedies of the period and audience responses to them. If nothing was the same in the theatre after *Tamburlaine*, as Ruth Lunney asserts, then the dismantling of *Dido* in the *Tamburlaine* plays gives us new insight into why and in what ways the drama changed. The tremendous popularity of the *Tamburlaine* plays is built on the ruins of the aesthetics of tragedy staged in *Dido*. In this context, I suggest that *Dido*, Marlowe's 'box-office flop', played a vital role in liberating both tragedy and audience responses to it from the restrictions that theory places upon them both.

PRIVATE DRAMA, PUBLIC SPECTACLE: DEATH AND THE PRE-REFORMATION LONDON ELITE

John Tillotson

For the sixteenth-century London elite death, burial, and remembrance was normally a lengthy and elaborate process. Its rituals were played out on a number of stages: the private or semi-private places of the household and churches, but also the public display of funeral processions in the streets and doles to the poor. The diarist Henry Machyn assiduously recorded the funerals of mayors and aldermen in the 1550s alongside other public theatre: royal entries into the city, Mayday celebrations, civic processions, public executions, and tournaments. Machyn described the funeral procession of Sir William Lok, mercer, who died in 1550, in these words:

[A]-ffor hym whent a lx pore men in mo[urning] gowns and whytt stayffes in ther handes ii and ii to-gether; [after] them the standard, and then mornars, and then came [...] with odur mornars, and then the clarkes and prestes, and then [a herald] with ys cott armor, target, elmet, sword, and then the corse [with] penons of armes borne a-bowt hym, and the stret [was] hangyd with blake and armes a-pone the cloth, and ther [was a] dolle of monay, and a grett denner.¹

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¹ *The Diary of Henry Machyn, Citizen and Merchant Tylor of London, from A.D. 1550 to A.D. 1563*, ed. by John Gough Nichols (London: Camden Society, 1848), pp. 1–2. Subsequent references are to Nichols's edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

Affirmation of status and the due ordering of a hierarchical society are apparent in the prominent display of Lok's coat of arms and are carried through into the elaborate provision of mourners, mourning dress, street decoration, and a great dinner.

Modern commentators on the period have recognized the dramatic qualities of such funerals. In his 1985 essay on the Shakespearean stage funeral, Michael Neill wrote that it 'drew on a major tradition of street pageantry [...] the pageant theater of death and mourning'. The elite dead were taken to burial in black-gowned processions of mourners, their passing marked by bell-ringing, almsgiving, and masses, and a more lasting commemoration sought through the construction of a tomb with effigy, shields, and inscriptions.² His pictorial example is the funeral procession of Lady Lumley in 1578, taken from one of the many drawings recording these events produced by officers of the College of Heralds.³ The line of mourners in their black gowns is a good illustration of the heavy expenditure by executors on costuming the funeral procession.

Neill interprets the funerals, 'in spite of their religious context', as 'primarily pieces of secular ostentation, "symbolic justifications of rank and status", organized according to elaborate rules by the College of Heralds'.⁴ Even for the late sixteenth century this may be too limited a view, and I want to argue that it does not stand up to scrutiny in the pre-Reformation period. The earlier 'pageant theater' was shorn of much of its religious content by doctrinal changes under Edward VI and Elizabeth I. In particular, 'the abolition of the doctrine of purgatory totally changed the relationship between the living and dead'.⁵ Most notably doctrinal change had removed the structure of prayers and masses for souls, and taken from almsgiving the urgent need for prayer to ease the pain of the newly dead as they began the process of purging sins. What remained largely unchanged were the rituals of eating and drinking, and the elements of display, whose focus was the living.⁶

² Michael Neill, "Exeunt with a Dead March": Funeral Pageantry on the Shakespearean Stage', in *Pageantry in the Shakespearean Theater*, ed. by David M. Bergeron (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1985), pp. 153–93 (p. 154).

³ Neill, "Exeunt with a Dead March", pp. 156–57. London, British Library, MS Additional 35324, Rothschild Bequest, vol. xv.

⁴ Neill, "Exeunt with a Dead March", p. 154.

⁵ Clare Gittings, 'Urban Funerals in Late Medieval and Reformation England', in *Death in Towns: Urban Responses to the Dying and the Dead*, ed. by Steven Bassett (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1992), pp. 170–83 (p. 173).

⁶ Gittings, 'Urban Funerals', p. 175.

There is now a rich historiography around the subject of early modern death, and historians such as Ralph Houlbrooke and Vanessa Harding have identified a complex range of functions and purposes for funeral rituals.⁷ My intention in this essay is to draw on the many broad-ranging studies for a detailed analysis of the drama and religious rituals of a group of five London funerals during the early years of Henry VIII's reign. Four were of Lord Mayors of the City and one of a Lady Mayoress: Thomas Bradbury, 1510; Sir John Tate and Sir William Capell, 1515; Sir John Rudston, 1531; and Dame Margaret Jenyns, 1521. For all the funerals except Rudston's, heralds' memoranda have survived, to varying degrees of detail, in a single manuscript.⁸ In the case of Sir John Rudston a detailed account by his executors of expenditure on his funeral is extant;⁹ and for all four mayors there are copies of wills detailing their provisions for prayers, masses, and almsgiving following their deaths in the records of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury.¹⁰

These members of the wealthy London elite had a recognized position in the upper ranks of Tudor society: recognized, that is, by the body responsible for granting coats of arms, the College of Heralds. The heralds were also the arbiters of precedence on official occasions.¹¹ Under the early Tudors they had come to have a controlling role in staging high-status funerals, as well as other public spectacles like tournaments or the ceremonial entry of monarchs into the City.¹² The relatively brief note by the herald on Sir John Tate's funeral in 1515 focuses on this

⁷ Ralph Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family in England, 1480–1750* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), chap. 9; Vanessa Harding, *The Dead and the Living in Paris and London, 1500–1670* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), chaps 7–9. See also Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400–1580* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), chaps 9–10; and Peter Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead in Reformation England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), chaps 1–3.

⁸ London, British Library, MS Additional 45131, Wriothesley Heraldic Collections, vol. 1.

⁹ London, British Library, MS Harley 1231, Paper Book, 52 fols.

¹⁰ London, National Archives, PROB 11/16, fols 202^v–203^r (PCC Register Bennett), Thomas Bradbury; PROB 11/18, fols 35^v–36^v (PCC Register Holder), John Tate; PROB 11/18, fols 96–100 (PCC Register Holder), William Capell; PROB 11/24, fols 53–55 (PCC Register Thower), John Rudston.

¹¹ On heraldic funerals, see Claire Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England* (London: Croom Helm, 1984), chap. 8; and Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family in England*, pp. 158–59.

¹² For the role of Garter King of Arms in the festivities for the entry of Emperor Charles V into London in 1522, see Sydney Anglo, *Spectacle Pageantry, and Early Tudor Policy*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 188–90.

matter of status. The writer notes that Tate's burial had to have something more than was appropriate to a knight bachelor, because his period as mayor gave him a baron's status. Hence his widow was entitled to wear a mantle and surcoat bearing his arms. York Herald was present at the funeral, and Garter King of Arms organized ceremonial, which included the offering of the hatchment displaying his armorial bearing to the church of St Anthony's Hospital, where he was buried. By a process that had been proceeding at least since the fourteenth century, the merchants and financiers who controlled City government had been integrated into the ranks of the landed nobility, whose occupation, ethos, and symbolism had always been military in nature.¹³ The element of role-playing in this was apparent to the defender of the English Catholic Church in the 1520s, Sir Thomas More, London lawyer and royal councillor, as it had been to his friend Erasmus in his colloquy *Funus*, 'The Funeral', printed in 1526.¹⁴

More vividly re-creates the public spectacle and display of status afforded by a pre-Reformation funeral in his *Supplication of Souls*.¹⁵ The souls of the wealthy dead in Purgatory describe their funerals in these words:

Mych haue many of vs bestowyd uppon ryche men in gold rynges and blak gownys: mych in many tapers & torchys: mych in worldly pomp and hygh solemne ceremonies about our funerallys [...] mych superfluouse charge used for boste and ostentacyon [...]. For some hathe there of vs whyle we were in helthe / not so myche studyed how we myght dye penytent and in good crysten plyght / as how we myght be solemnely borne owte to beryent / haue gay & goodly funerallys wyth herawdys at hersys / and ofryng vp oure helmettys / setting vp our skouchyn and cote armours on the wall though there neuer cam harneyse on our bakkys / nor neuer auncestour of ours euer bare armis byfore. (pp. 219–20)

¹³ S. Thrupp, *The Merchant Class of Medieval London 1300–1500* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), chap. 6; Caroline M. Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages: Government and People, 1200–1500* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). A splendid example of the magnate's tomb is that of John de la Pole (d. 1491) and his wife Elizabeth at Wingfield parish church, Suffolk. His helm is still on the wall above his tomb, and there are supporters on either side for his banners (Figure 18).

¹⁴ *Funus* includes a satirical account of a wealthy man's deathbed and provisions for his funeral: see Erasmus, *Colloquies*, in *Collected Works of Erasmus*, trans. and ed. by Craig R. Thompson, vol. XXXX (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), pp. 763–95. Further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text. Unlike More, however, whose work is a defence of the doctrine of Purgatory and the prayers and masses for souls there, Erasmus goes beyond criticism of excessive expenditure on funeral pomp to question the efficacy of post-mortem prayers and good works for the soul.

¹⁵ *Complete Works of St Thomas More*, vol. VII, ed. by Frank Manley and others (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), pp. 107–228. All subsequent references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.



Figure 18. De la Pole Tomb, Wingfield Parish Church, Suffolk.
Photograph: Dianne Tillotson.

Such vainglorious display had developed, however, out of what continued to be an essentially religious occasion concerned with assuring the health of the soul. More wrote *Supplication of Souls* in 1529 in order to refute Simon Fish's *Supplication of Beggars*, an attack on the wealth and abuses of the clergy which challenged the very existence of Purgatory, printed and distributed as a pamphlet earlier that year.¹⁶ In his rebuttal of Fish's claims, More defended belief in a place of purgation and vigorously asserted the relief given to souls 'by the pryuate prayers of good vertuouse people / and specyally by the dayly Masses & other gostely suffrages of prestys / relygyouse / and folke of holy church' (p. 111). He reiterated with more sophisticated arguments the simple message of a fifteenth-century drawing accompanying a religious poem, which depicts souls lifted towards heaven from the fires by masses and doles to the poor.¹⁷ Sufficient concern about Purgatory coexisted alongside a desire for display and personal commemoration to produce a veritable frenzy of pious activity after an elite death, sometimes specified in considerable detail in wills. A good example is that of Sir John Tate in 1515, which set in motion doles, prayers, and masses in a range of institutions across London: friaries, monasteries, anchorholds, parish churches, hospitals, and prisons.¹⁸

A feature of More's writing in *Supplication of Souls* is his use of dramatic imagery linking popular beliefs about ghosts and spirits on the threshold of the hereafter to the theologians' definitions of the soul.¹⁹ His actors in the drama of death and burial include the dead as well as the living. Sir Thomas recognizes the need to counter the mockery of heretics at his souls using a traditional pictorial device when they speak of 'our heddes / our handys / our feete / and suche our other grose bodyly members as lye beryed in our grauis' (p. 226). Souls are bodiless, and so not subject to physical pain; but the device is necessary because it is impossible for anyone to conceive of the nature of the 'soul', or the torments that it suffers in Purgatory. Nonetheless, a pitiful image of souls in human form is created.

¹⁶ The first edition is reprinted in *Complete Works of St Thomas More*, vol. VII, ed. by Manley and others, Appendix B, pp. 409–22.

¹⁷ London, British Library, MS Additional 37049, fol. 24b, a collection of religious poems in Northern English, first half of the fifteenth century. The drawing is reprinted as plate 7 in Takami Matsuda, *Death and Purgatory in Middle English Didactic Poetry* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1997), p. 155. Dr. Robyn White drew my attention to this drawing.

¹⁸ National Archives, PROB 11/18, fols 35^v–36^v (PCC Register Holder), John Tate.

¹⁹ On ghosts and spirits, see Jean Claude Schmitt, *Ghosts in the Middle Ages: The Living and the Dead in Medieval Society*, trans. by Teresa Lavender Fagan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

Those who have been more concerned in life to plan grandiose funerals than to help the needy are represented as punished for their negligence and pride by being present at their own obsequies, although they remain invisible to the living:

For Specyall punyshement [...] some of vs haue bene by our euyll aunghels brought forth full heuely in full great despyght to beholde our awne beryeng / and so standen in great payne inuysyble among the preace / and made to loke on our careyn corps caryed owte wyth great pompe / wherof our lorde knoweth we haue taken heuy pleasure. (p. 220)

Nor are souls only present at the burial ceremony. Devils may take them back to their former mansions, and 'in dispyghtfull morkage / caste in oure teeth our old loue borne to our money', show them their executors 'as bysly ryfling & ransakyng our housys / as thogh they were men of warr that had taken a town by force' (p. 221), and reveal to them wives soon faithless to their old loves. One message to the living is to make better charitable disposition of goods before death requires it; but *Supplication of Souls* also reaffirms the community between living and dead binding them in a common endeavour, the salvation of souls. The sometimes detailed provisions of wills, the fitting funeral, and the legacies for pious works were dependent on the diligence and honesty of executors for fulfillment, and the work appears to leave no doubt of concerns about the performance of family, colleagues, and friends. 'Remember what kyn ye and we be together', the souls adjure the living, 'what famelier frendship hath ere this bene betwene vs: what swete wordys ye haue spoken and what promyse ye haue made vs. Let now your wordis appere and your fayre promyse be kept' (p. 226). Yet despite More's cynical comments about them, wives were frequently made executors: the wills of all four mayors in this sample appointed the widow an executor, and in Sir John Tate's case sole executor.²⁰

The histrionic character of the elite funeral is evident in each of the successive acts in the drama of death and burial. The first scene is the pious deathbed. The moment of death was regarded as a dangerous one for the safety of the soul. A window in St Martin-le-Grand, York, which shows the triumphant deathbed of the patron saint of the church, bears witness also to the imminent peril. Priests attend the saint, one of them holding the scriptures before his eyes, but there is also a disempowered devil in the background (Figure 19).

Ars Moriendi literature instructed the pious in how to make a good death and escape the snares of devils. The deathbed in this imaginative re-creation might

²⁰ Claire S. Schen has calculated that two-thirds of London testators named their wives executrices: *Charity and Lay Piety in Reformation London* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), p. 64.



Figure 19. Deathbed of St Martin.
Stained glass, St Martin-le-Grand, York.
Photograph: Dianne Tillotson.

become a war zone for possession of the soul.²¹ The frontispiece to *The Dyenge Creature* (1507) shows the dying man's soul leaving his body in human form assisted by angels against the enraged resistance of devils. His eyes are on a large crucifix and in his left hand he holds a taper.²² Erasmus in his colloquy *Funus* supplied a script for the scene:

A crucifix and wax taper were held out to the sick man. To the crucifix extended to him he said, 'In war I was accustomed to rely on my shield; now will I face my foe with this shield.' And after he kissed it, he turned on his left side. To the taper he said, 'I used to excel with my spear in war; now will I brandish this spear against the enemy of souls.' (p. 774)

The passage reflects the common belief that assurance of salvation depended on dying in the right frame of mind, hav-

ing recollected unconfessed sins. Prayers, images, and other aids helped sustain the right dispositions to the point of death.²³

In anticipation of their final illness, prudent persons sought to ensure the continuance of good works for their soul through a last will and testament, which prescribed for their executors the prayers, masses, and alms to be undertaken for a fixed term or in perpetuity. Sir John Rudston, for example, made his will on

²¹ Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, p. 270 (illustration 119).

²² Reproduced in Susan Brigden, 'Religion and Social Obligation in Early Sixteenth-Century London', *Past and Present*, 103 (1984), 67–112 (p. 85). The same image appears in Margaret Aston's essay 'Death', in *Fifteenth-Century Attitudes: Perceptions of Society in Late Medieval England*, ed. by Rosemary Horrox (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 202–35 (p. 211).

²³ Richard Wunderli and Gerald Broce, 'The Final Moment before Death in Early Modern England', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 20 (1989), 259–75. On the Art of Dying I have also drawn on Robyn L. White's discussion in her unpublished doctoral thesis: 'Early Print and Purgatory: The Shaping of an Henrician Ideology' (Australian National University, 1994), chap. 3 (esp. pp. 62–78).

16 August 1530, one year before his death. The recipients of his legacies included his parish churches, both St Michael's Cornhill, London, and St Martin's Hayton in Yorkshire, his birthplace; all the Orders of Friars in London; the nuns of the Minories outside Aldgate; the nuns of Dartford in Kent; two fraternities; and divinity students at Oxford and Cambridge, who were to receive fifteen pounds towards two exhibitions for three years. Immediately after Sir John's decease, the five Orders of Friars were required to provide sixty requiem masses, and another ninety masses were to be said at St Michael's Cornhill. The convent of the Crossed Friars received twenty pounds towards its building programme in return for five years of prayers and masses at the altar of *Scala Celi*.²⁴ More long-term prayers and masses were to be secured by an annual obit or anniversary in St Michael's Cornhill, established and attended by the Drapers' Company, and concluded with a potation at their hall. Fellowship, memorial, and the community of the living and the dead are all represented in this obit, as was his gift to the Drapers of a great silver cup, 'for a memory'.²⁵

Sir John received the last rites on 21 August 1531. The process of intercession had already begun, with thirty masses and the distribution of thirty-five shillings to poor folk. Further gifts to the poor for prayers followed in the next few days. Whilst the right spiritual environment was being created, Sir John also received the services of physicians, expensive treatment that would have served only to hasten his end. The elderly man underwent bloodletting (phlebotomy) and died on 23 August. His departing was marked by the tolling of the bell of St Michael's Cornhill, a mark of Rudston's status and an announcement of his need for prayers, but also in itself perhaps a form of intercession for his soul meant to assist its passage and keep demons at bay.²⁶ Another five days elapsed between his death and burial on 28 August, and this probably represents the minimum time required to put in place arrangements for the public spectacle of his funeral procession. Carlyle Herald had responsibility for this event, and his arrangements will be discussed later on.²⁷

Rudston's departure from life conformed to the ideal pattern, but circumstances did not necessarily permit the approved rituals to take place at the

²⁴ The 'ladder of heaven', by which souls in a vision of St Bernard had ascended to heaven. The legend had become the basis for a popular indulgence: see Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, pp. 375–76.

²⁵ BL, MS Harley 1231, fols 4, 5^{r-v}.

²⁶ Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead*, p. 15.

²⁷ Carlyle Herald received a fee of £5 for his work, together with a black gown. BL, MS Harley 1231, fols 10^v, 17.

deathbed. A different scenario is recorded in the heralds' records of the funeral of Dame Margaret Jenyns, the wife of Sir Stephen Jenyns, mayor of London in 1508–09. On Friday 15 March 1521, we read, 'Dame Margaret went to bed in good hethe and after her furst slepe such humurs arysse on her that no withstanding any help that she myght have it stopped her brethe'.²⁸ The suddenness of her death apparently left no opportunity to administer the last rites or for ordering of her affairs. Perforce agency in provision for Dame Margaret's soul and for a funeral appropriate to her status now belonged to others, her husband and the officers of the College of Heralds. However, established funeral rituals covered contingencies like this.

In the first place the need was to make provision for the body in the days preceding the funeral. Dame Margaret's corpse was waxed and laid in a 'fayre large chamber' in her home in Aldermanbury, hung with black hangings decorated with her arms. The room was next to a private chapel where masses were said daily for the duration of the body's stay there. Four wax candles continually burned around it, and 'ther was always certain persons bothe day and nyght attendyng & waching the body'. The symbolism of the candles was very direct: light represented Christ, the Light of the World, the opposite of darkness and sin. As such they were effective in averting evil and driving away devils, which might be present near the unburied dead. Their protective power joined with that of the masses in the nearby chapel and the prayers of the watchers, whose presence seems intended partly to provide honourable service to Dame Margaret and partly to assist her soul in its transition to the next world.²⁹ In effect great care was taken to help the soul in its liminal state, in ways that reflect the solidarity of family and wider social circle with the dead. No occasion was left for the departed's spirit to haunt the living with pleas for due performance of prayers and masses.³⁰

On the Sunday following her death, 17 March, Dame Margaret's body was carried to the main ceremonial room of the mansion, the hall, in which a portable altar had been set up to continue provision of services for her soul. The hall too was furnished with black hangings decorated with her arms. From there it was taken 'nobly accompayned' to her parish church along a route hung with black hangings

²⁸ BL, MS Additional 45131, Wriothesley Heraldic Collections, vol. I, fol. 87^v.

²⁹ On candles in the context of death and funerals, see Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, pp. 361–62.

³⁰ Schmitt, *Ghosts in the Middle Ages*, pp. 66–67. The pre-burial ritual after the death of Dame Thomasyn Parcyvale in 1512 is described in Schen, and included poor men and women watching the body (*Charity and Lay Piety*, p. 56).

decorated with the arms of her marriages. These solemn decorations hung in the court of the house, part of the street, the church itself, and the chapel where her hearse had been set up.³¹ The procession itself is not described, but the pennon bearing her arms would have been displayed; it is pictured in the description of her funeral. We know too that Rouge Croix Pursuivant, a junior officer of the College of Heralds, bore the king's coat of arms in the procession and that Garter King of Arms was also present and arranged the burial. The suffragan bishop of London performed the service, and proceedings included a sermon, three solemn Masses, and a dole.³²

Clearly for the herald writing the description, a prime objective was to organize a funeral appropriate to the status of the dead woman. He boasts that the burial, as a spectacle, was as 'honorable & sumptueux' in liveries, wax, alms, and victuals as had been seen in the case of any knight bachelor's wife for a good while before. The impressive cost was also worth recording: more than three hundred marks (two hundred pounds). Death and burial are here treated as a commodity, regulated according to status in a hierarchical society. Expense and rank are similarly prominent in the incomplete account of Sir William Capel's funeral.³³ Sir William, who died in 1515, had been one of London's most prominent citizens, twice Lord Mayor (1503–04 and 1510). Two daughters were married to peers.³⁴ His exequies, organized by Garter King of Arms, were suitably splendid.

The surviving herald's record relates to Capel's lying-in-state for a period of six days in the parlour of his mansion. During this time there were numerous visitors each day 'whiche were honorably seruyd'. The body had been waxed and lay under three coverings in an ascending order of cost. Each was congruous with his status

³¹ Banners, hangings with shields of arms around the church, and coats of arms on the hearse are depicted in the funeral service in the Hastings Book of Hours (c. 1480), London, British Library, MS Additional 54782, fol. 184^v.

³² BL, MS Additional 45131, Wriothesley Heraldic Collections, vol. 1, fol. 87^v.

³³ The account only extends to the point where Capel's body is to be transported to the burial church. Space has been left in the manuscript for a description of the procession, but the page and a half is blank. BL, MS Additional 45131, fols 167^v–168^r.

³⁴ He was an alderman for thirty years, sheriff in 1489–90, and M.P. for London in 1491, 1512, and 1514–15. He was Master of the Drapers on numerous occasions. Rev. Alfred B. Beaven, *The Aldermen of the City of London*, vol. II, 'Combined excerpts covering 1422–1509 Reigns of Henry VI, Edward IV, Edward V, Richard III, Henry VII', s. v. 1485 Oct. Rawson. <http://genealogy.patp.us/aldermen_1400.aspx> [accessed 6 September 2006]. His elder daughter married the first marquess of Winchester, and his younger daughter married John, Lord Zouche.

in London's hierarchy and accorded with the prescriptions of the statutes of 1463 and 1483 regulating apparel.³⁵ The lowest covering was of black worsted, with a white cross, a well-off citizen's cloth; the next level of black velvet, permitted to knights and mayors of the City; and the top layer of cloth of gold, restricted by the acts to lords and above. Like Tate, Capel's period of office as mayor entitled him to the privileges of a baron's rank. Cloth of gold was a very valuable material. The appraisers of Sir John Rudston's goods in 1531 valued the cloth of gold in his warehouse at variously £3 6s. 8d., 30s., 23s. 4d., and 20s., the yard.³⁶

Whilst the body remained in his mansion, four tapers burned continually around it and four or six Franciscans kept up constant prayers as they watched and attended upon it. The house itself was in mourning; parlour, hall, court, and gate were all hung with black cloths decorated with Capel's arms. A portable altar in the parlour and daily services in the parish church kept up intercession for his soul until the day of his funeral procession and burial. Capel left his executors detailed instruction about his exequies, in which he designed an impressive show for his funeral. Twenty-four torches were to be held by poor men at his burial and month's mind, each of whom was to receive a black gown. In a distinctive addition to the mourning dress, the words 'auxilium meum a domino' were to be placed on the sleeve of every gown.³⁷ Six of his fellow drapers were to bear his body to the church for burial, and on the day after he wanted children from the grammar and song school at St Anthony's Hospital present at the requiem mass. The children brought by the masters and the usher of the schools must be able to participate to the extent that they were able to say their *diriges*, part of the office of the dead.³⁸

Many candles and the presence of children enhanced the dramatic potential of funeral display. A powerful effect of pure light about the body would have been created, for example, by the forty wax candles weighing three pounds each that Sir

³⁵ *Complaint and Reform in England 1436–1714*, arranged with introductions by W. H. Dunham and S. Pargellis (New York: Oxford University Press, 1938), pp. 35–43.

³⁶ BL, MS Harley 1231, fol. 32 ('In the Warehouse next the Great Chamber').

³⁷ Psalm 120. 2, part of Vespers of the Dead: see *The Roman Breviary* <<http://breviary.net/allsoulsguild/office/vespersdead.htm>> [accessed 19 October 2006]. In 1502, Sir John Percivale, late mayor of London, asked that *Ihn* in white wool be placed on the right sleeve of the gowns given to poor men bearing torches: Schen, *Charity and Lay Piety*, p. 55.

³⁸ See Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family in England*, p. 256. St Anthony's had a schoolmaster, a master of the song-school, and an usher of the school in 1522: 'Alien Houses: Hospital of St Anthony', in *History of the County of London*, ed. by William Page (London: A. Constable, 1909), I, 581–84.

Stephen, former husband of Lady Jenyns, specified in his will of 1522.³⁹ Twenty-four of them were to accompany his corpse to burial held by male children in surplices of white linen, and the children were also to carry them at the office of the dead and requiem mass, at both his burial and his month's mind. The remaining sixteen candles were to burn around his corpse and tomb during the weeks up to his month's mind 'as the maner is'.



Figure 20. Feeding the Hungry. Stained glass (detail), All Saints' North Street, York. Photograph: Dianne Tillotson.

Sir Stephen also required that the bearers be children of the poor, who could say the matins of Our Lady and the psalm *De profundis* from the office of the dead. In this way he combined belief in the efficacy of innocence as a tool of intercession with the widespread reliance on the poor as intercessors and beneficiaries of good works (Figure 20).⁴⁰ The many funeral provisions of this kind, and the other kinds of alms to the poor and the incapacitated detailed in wills, must have relied on executors being able to access information about local unfortunates. We know that the wealth of parishioners had to be assessed in order to determine annual contributions to support the parish clerk. Perhaps the officials who made those

³⁹ National Archives, PROB 11/21, fols 60–61 (PCC Register Bodfelde), Stephen Jenyns.

⁴⁰ See Figure 20, the Works of Mercy Window in All Saints' North Street. The seven corporal almsdeeds are feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, giving shelter to the stranger, visiting the sick, ransoming the captive, and burying the dead. *New Advent*, 'Summa Theologica: The Different Kinds of Alms' <<http://www.newadvent.org/summa/3032.htm#article2>> [accessed 17 October 2006].

assessments also identified recipients of alms appropriate to the requirements of the many wills leaving bequests to the poor and sick.⁴¹

As is the case with Sir William Capel's burial, the heralds have not left a record of Jenyns's funeral procession, but his will suggests an impressive occasion. The five Orders of Friars and sixty priests drawn from fraternities, the hospital of St Augustine Pappey, and the brotherhood of parish clerks of London were requested to accompany his body to burial and say the office of the dead and requiem mass. Certainly he was a man concerned to preserve his memory, and the evidence suggests that this was an end in itself as much as a means to prompt fellow Christians to prayers for his soul. A service that the heralds provided at funerals was to supply correct coats of arms and pennons for clients, and it was natural that they should be involved in the design of the elaborate tombs favoured by the wealthy. Jenyns's tomb and funeral effigy in the church of the friars minor is recorded by a drawing in which the herald shows the layout of the family's coats of arms on front, back, and sides of the tomb chest.⁴² More's sarcastic comments about the military affectations of Londoners are validated by the drawing of the effigy. It takes the form of a knight in full armour, head resting on his helm, with a hunting dog as supporter at his feet; in other words, a standard military figure. There is other evidence, too, of the way in which Jenyns combined pious activity with display of personal and civic importance. Stow records that after he rebuilt much of the church of St Andrew Undershaft, his arms were carved on every pillar and his bequests recorded in the glazing and on the pews.⁴³ In the context of contemporary beliefs about the afterlife, however, it is not surprising that wealth and status were expressed in ways that served religious objectives.

So far the heralds' evidence considered has not included a full description of the main scene in the pageantry of death, the funeral procession. This is supplied by Calais Pursuivant's account of the burial of Lord Mayor Thomas Bradbury, who died in office on 10 January 1510.⁴⁴ Normally the heralds' work inside the burial

⁴¹ For a discussion of parish assessments, see Clive Burgess's analysis of the churchwardens' accounts of St Andrew Hubbard, London, in his article 'Pre-Reformation Churchwardens' Accounts and Parish Government: Lessons from London and Bristol', *English Historical Review*, 117 (2002), 306–32 (p. 318).

⁴² BL, MS Additional 45131, fol. 86, Wriothesley Heraldic Collections, vol. I. The tomb was in a chapel on the south side of the choir, but is no longer extant.

⁴³ John Stow, *A Survey of London*, ed. by C. L. Kingsford, 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1908 and 1927), I, 145.

⁴⁴ BL, MS Additional 45131, fols 151^r–152^v, Wriothesley Heraldic Collections, vol. I. The first folio is reproduced in Anne F. Sutton's essay 'Lady Joan Bradbury (d. 1530)', in *Medieval London*

church centred on a hearse decorated with flags and escutcheons, but the choir of St Stephen's in Coleman Street was too small for such a construction to be possible. Instead the finishing-point of the procession became his vault before the image of the Virgin Mary, where four branched candlesticks decorated with small flags were set up. The route to the church from the hall of Bradbury's house was hung with black cloths bearing the escutcheons of his arms: around the courtyard, along the street, and into the choir and lady chapel of the church. Shields bearing his arms and pencils (small pennons) were produced for the occasion in profusion. One hundred and seventy-four escutcheons and ninety-six pencils were supplied by a group of craftsmen.⁴⁵ The identifying function of these shields of arms continued beyond the funeral itself. A number were later given to London churches 'for his Remembrance', including a gift to the Orders of Friars who had begun singing and saying six trentals (or sets of thirty) masses immediately after his death.

The funeral procession on 14 January was imposing in its composition, reflecting Bradbury's network of friends and associates outside London as well as within the City and its government. It required the knowledge of the herald to organize position and precedence. Friars from all the London orders led it, along with the ministers of the parish church and the prior of Holy Trinity Aldgate, one of the City aldermen, all in their vestments.⁴⁶ They were followed by certain gentlemen in livery, the rest of Bradbury's blood relatives, his chaplains, and his executors (the Bishop of Norwich and Master Richard Broke). His male heir walked in front of the body bearing Bradbury's pennon of his arms, and behind him Calais Pursuivant bearing his coat of arms. At each corner of the bier a banner or pennon was borne, two with religious images (St Paul and St Thomas of Canterbury) and two with

Widows, ed. by Caroline M. Barron and Anne F. Sutton (London: Hambledon, 1994), pp. 208–38 (p. 208). Bradbury's funeral is described and discussed by Sutton (pp. 217–18), and I wish to acknowledge the indebtedness of my analysis to her essay.

⁴⁵ The craftsmen included one John Browne, who may be the same person appointed as king's painter in 1511. He is known to have included this kind of work in his career (Anglo, *Spectacle Pageantry*, p. 164). The size and type of banners borne at funerals was graded according to rank (*Diary*, ed. by Nichols pp. xxvi–xxix). Since knighthood normally followed on a mayoralty, and Bradbury did not live to complete his term, he is described in the herald's account as a 'gentilman', and his shields and flags are appropriate to that status.

⁴⁶ Holy Trinity Aldgate was a house of Austin Canons, founded in the reign of Henry I. Its prior was the alderman of Portsoken Ward, and active in the City and at Court. By the early sixteenth century, however, the house was in serious financial difficulties: see 'Austin Canons: Priory of Holy Trinity or Christchurch Aldgate', in *History of the County of London*, ed. by Page, I, 465–75.

secular images (the arms of the City of London and the Mercers' Company arms); and each side had two attendants. The principal mourners followed the corpse, led by his widow Dame Jane, who had Sir Robert Dymoke and a number of ladies to assist her. Officers of the City, the new mayor Sir William Capel arm-in-arm with the grand prior of St John of Jerusalem,⁴⁷ Lord Bergavenny,⁴⁸ and other nobles followed; then the aldermen, and representatives of the Mercers Company and other crafts in that order. Thirty poor men accompanied the procession bearing torches, which were placed in the gallery at the west end of the church during the service. Four poor men also held tapers about the tomb, where Dame Jane and the other principal mourners were seated.⁴⁹

Calais Pursuivant records the arrangement of participants inside the small church for the burial. The prior of Holy Trinity Aldgate performed the divine service from the curate's place on one side of the choir, whilst the bishops of Norwich, Exeter, and St David's were seated on the other side. Singers were in the rood loft, and torches burned at the west end. The mayor, the prior of St John of Jerusalem, Lord Bergavenny, and other noblemen sat with the aldermen in the South Chapel, and all other gentlewomen except the principal mourners sat on the south side of the church. The crafts filed past the dead mayor's hearse one after the other and said the psalm *De profundis* (Psalm 129), the beginning of vespers of the dead. Then at the seventh lesson the mayor and alderman followed suit, and after them, evidently in the position of honour, the Mercers, 'by cause he was of the said craft'. All the civic dignitaries and representatives of the livery companies then left the church, and the chief mourners followed suit after *dirige* (matins of the dead).⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Sir Thomas Docwra (d. 1527) was elected grand prior of the hospital of St John of Jerusalem in England in 1501. Its principal house was Clerkenwell, where Sir Thomas was active in building work. He was employed as a diplomat by Henry VII and Henry VIII, and on domestic commissions in London and elsewhere. See Andrew A. Chibi's essay, *Oxford DNB* (Online), s.v. Docwra, Sir Thomas.

⁴⁸ George Neville, third Baron Bergavenny (c. 1469–1535), a member of the royal council under both Henry VII and Henry VIII. See Alasdair Hawkyard's essay, *Oxford DNB* (Online), s.v. Neville, George, third Baron Bergavenny.

⁴⁹ In Erasmus's colloquy *Funus* the numbers of friars, torchbearers, and mourners in the funeral procession all have a religious symbolism attached to them. Erasmus also adds a humorous touch to his fictitious procession: the bier was to be followed by the deceased's horse 'draped in black, with head tied down to his knees to suggest that he was looking along the ground for his master' (p. 772).

⁵⁰ See both 'Vespers of the Dead' <<http://breviary.net/allsoulsguild/office/vespersdead.htm>> and 'Office of the Dead' <<http://breviary.net/allsoulsguild/office/office.htm>> [accessed 23 October

Only those still remaining attended the actual burial, and for the respectable persons among them there were refreshments of spice-bread, cheese, comfits, sweets, wine, and hippocras at the deceased's house.

These refreshments concluded the first act of the funeral performance. On the morrow, at seven o'clock, votive masses were sung, accompanied by organ music: the mass of Our Lady was sung by the prior of Holy Trinity Aldgate, and the mass of the Trinity by the abbot of Stratford Langthorne in Essex, both in pontifical vestments. Then, after a short pause, the requiem mass was sung by the Bishop of Norwich, and at the offertory Dame Jane Bradbury offered the mass-penny, attended again by Sir Robert Dymoke.⁵¹ She was followed by other relatives and one of the executors offering the armorial symbols of his rank: 'William and Henry Bradebery offred the cote of armes, Mr Broke and Mr Josselyn offered the sheld, Mr Tyrell and Mr Leche offred the helme and creste.'⁵² The mourners came next with their offerings, and after them the bishops of Exeter and St David's, and 'soo oder noble men aftir their astate & degrees'. The ceremonial concluded at the end of the mass with the offering of the late mayor's pennon: 'at *verbum caro factum est* was offryd up the pennon off his armes'.⁵³ All these heraldic trappings were later set up around Bradbury's tomb, the herald reports.

Whilst the sacrifice of the mass was being offered for the profit of Bradbury's soul in the presence of nobles, fellow citizens, and prelates, in another place the rich man was also harnessing the services of the poor to assist his soul through their prayers. Calais Pursuivant records that during the time of mass there was a great

2006]. On the office of the dead, see also 'The Ritual of Burial', *Catholic Encyclopedia*, <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03071a.htm>> [accessed 23 October 2006].

⁵¹ For a full discussion of the office of the dead, requiem, and votive masses, see Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, pp. 368–76.

⁵² Anne Sutton has identified the participants in the funeral: Henry and William Bradbury were Thomas's brother and nephew respectively; Richard Broke was under-sheriff and one of his executors, and John Josselyn his brother-in-law; William Tyrell was the husband of his wife's daughter, Elizabeth; and John Leche was a relative of the widow ('Lady Joan Bradbury', pp. 217–18).

⁵³ The opening words of St John's Gospel are *verbum caro factum est*. 'The Last Gospel', read at the close of the mass, was taken from this Gospel. See Rev. Joseph A. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development (Missarum Solemnia)*, vol. II, Replica edition of 1951 translation (Allen: Christian Classics, 1986), pp. 447–51. The importance of this text to theologians was paralleled in popular culture by belief in its protective powers. It was written on strips of parchment and worn about the person (Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, pp. 275–76). My graduate student Darren Buck drew my attention to this phenomenon.

dole to poor people at Prince's Wardrobe, and alms were sent to bedridden people in various places of the city. The funeral process then concluded with a sumptuous dinner at Bradbury's house for the mourners, and those unable to attend might also have appropriate portions of meat and wine delivered to their lodgings. The mechanisms by which the poor were assembled at Prince's Wardrobe and their bedridden counterparts identified remain obscure. Perhaps, as at Kingston-upon-Hull, the death of a prominent London citizen was made known in neighbouring Wards by the bellman, after the news of his passing had been initially signalled by the bell of the parish church.⁵⁴ For the needy, sick, and incapacitated, executors may have relied on churchwardens and other parish governors.⁵⁵

Because of the function of the College of Arms in granting and recording coats of arms, the evidence of heralds' records naturally gives strong emphasis to the worldly aspect of funerals. The sources focus attention on display and expense. As well as describing Bradbury's exequies, Calais Pursuivant also sets down the bill submitted by the painters for the accoutrements of rank and civic dignity: his coat of arms, a shield of arms, helm and crest, the banners and pennons, ninety-six pencils (or small pennons), and more than 150 escutcheons. The total bill came to £15 12s. 7d. It was indeed 'all the pomp appropriate for a lord mayor who died in office',⁵⁶ and in this hierarchical society the herald records as an important separate entry the names of the nobles and gentlemen who were present at the interment of someone whose office gave him the status of a baron: three bishops, an abbot, the prior of the hospital of St John of Jerusalem, and Lord Bergavenny. However, the shields of arms that seem a matter of secular display could become a part of the search for prayers. The herald records that various escutcheons bearing Bradbury's arms were given to the friars, other religious houses, and churches, 'ffor his Remembrance on whos sowle God haue mercy Amen'.

Bradbury's funeral was a remarkable display of conspicuous consumption, but all the indications are that lavish expenditure was expected from families of the civic elite, before the Reformation and after. Dame Margaret Jenyns's funeral was costed at more than two hundred pounds, and it is not clear what items the herald included in his estimate or whether it can be regarded as comprehensive. Certainly the expenditure on Sir John Rudston's funeral in 1531 was much heavier. The

⁵⁴ Peter Heath, 'Urban Piety in the Later Middle Ages: The Evidence of Hull Wills', in *The Church, Politics and Patronage in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. by Barry Dobson (Gloucester: Sutton, 1984), pp. 209–34 (p. 217).

⁵⁵ See Burgess, 'Pre-Reformation Churchwardens', p. 318.

⁵⁶ Sutton, 'Lady Joan Bradbury', p. 217.

accounts compiled by his executors for the period between his receiving the last rites and his month's mind are detailed and offer a window into the staging of the event in both its religious and secular aspects.⁵⁷ They show that his executors expended more than four hundred pounds on staging a funeral appropriate to his rank, paying for the religious services and charitable works that were designed to assist his soul, and providing the food and drink that formed the more convivial aspect of the whole process.

A remarkable feature of the staging of the funeral is the tight timetable, if indeed all the black gowns that were paid for were meant for participants. Only five days elapsed between Sir John's death and his burial on 28 August 1531. His will bequeathed gowns to thirty-two named people, and in each case the quality and cost was scaled according to rank. These were part of a much larger amount of clothing paid for by the executors, who expended more than £174 on a hundred and twenty-five gowns, five coats, and two kirtles. It was a bonanza for Rudston's fellow drapers, and particularly for three of them: Christopher Ascue, a fellow alderman and an executor of Sir John's will,⁵⁸ who received more than fifty pounds; Master Page, who was paid more than thirty-nine pounds; and Master Lyncolne, whose bill was the highest at more than sixty-seven pounds. A curious feature of the sums paid out for the black gowns purchased for the thirty-two bequeathed gowns is that in every case what was spent exceeded what Rudston had specified in his will. It appears that either the executors or the herald in charge of proceedings was more sensitive to the quality of cloth appropriate to rank than Sir John.

Similarly, efficient organization was required to assemble all the required participants in the funeral and prepare the stage properties for the event, the task principally perhaps of Carlisle Herald.⁵⁹ Sir John himself requested that the five Orders of Friars bring his corpse to church, and sixty priests were also present at the burial.⁶⁰ Nine of the twenty-four aldermen and the recorder of the City processed with the mayor, Thomas Pargeter, and his swordbearer. According to

⁵⁷ BL, MS Harley 1231, fols 7^v–19^v.

⁵⁸ He was sheriff of London 1525–26, and mayor 1533–34: Beaven, *Aldermen of the City of London*, II, s. v. 1524 Aug 5 Aylmer.

⁵⁹ He received a payment of £5 for his work: BL, MS Harley 1231, fol. 17.

⁶⁰ For the payment of 2d. each to the sixty priests at the burial, see BL, MS Harley 1231, fol. 18^v. In his will Sir John bequeathed 20s. to every house of the five Orders of Friars in the City. As well as accompanying his corpse to burial, the friars were to say two trentals of masses, the office of the dead, and a requiem mass as quickly as possible after his death. The payment of the bequest is recorded on fols 2^v and 20^v.

Rudston's instructions, twenty-six torchbearers clothed in gowns and hoods of black frieze were to accompany the coffin, and twenty-four poor and honest householders carried large candles. As with funerals considered earlier, there was an abundance of candles around and on the hearse. The chandler's bill came to twenty-five pounds, with an additional six pence paid to his workmen for malmsey when they set up the candles on the ironwork. Their light would have contrasted dramatically with the prevailing sombreness of black draperies and gowns. In the midst of the mourning, however, the rank of the dead man, his position within the City hierarchy, also formed part of the funeral display. The painter's bill for coats of arms, banners, and other indications of knightly or civic status came to another nineteen pounds.⁶¹

Because the dead man's soul continued to need the prayers and masses of the living during its stay in Purgatory, the process of making a good death did not end with burial and the associated dinners for rich and poor. The accounts of Rudston's executors only conclude with the month's mind, thirty days after his death, when they funded another round of service and masses for his soul, and more convivial eating. In the interim the office of the dead and masses had continued to be performed.⁶² Moreover, in the longer term there was to be an annual obit or anniversary, which Sir John established with a bequest of £120 to the Drapers Company. This was to be administered by his fellow drapers, who were expected to attend in their livery and receive refreshments at their hall afterwards. The event was to be publicized by the ringing of the bells at St Michael's Cornhill, and money distributed to the poor who came to the services. Peter Marshall has aptly described the nature and purpose of these proceedings: 'the performative and mimetic character of the obit was intended to jog memories, and to draw as many as possible into the collective business of intercessory prayer'.⁶³

Finally, the fulfillment of obligations to charity, made visual for wealthy parishioners by the Seven Works of Mercy windows (such as Figure 20), meant that the poor of London parishes, particularly in the neighbourhood of Rudston's home, continued to be reminded of his need for prayers for years after his death. Under his will every poor householder in three local parishes, whose goods did not exceed ten pounds in value, was to receive twelve pence. His executors extended this poor

⁶¹ BL, MS Harley 1231, fol. 17^v.

⁶² Priests and clerks received a total of £4 19s. 3d. for *dirige* and masses from the day of burial to the day of the month's mind. BL, MS Harley 1231, fol. 19. The total cost of the month's mind, including refreshments, was more than £8.

⁶³ Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead*, p. 21.

relief to almost half the London parishes. As well sixty poor maidens in the wards of Cornhill, Langbourn, and Candlewick were to receive six shillings and eight pence towards their marriages. Coal was to be provided for poor householders for ten years, delivered a week before Christmas. Every Sunday for seven years one penny was to be given to twenty-four poor householders in the parish of St Michael 'to pray for my sowle and all Christen sowles'. Nor were the needy in prison forgotten; an act of charity which, it has been said, 'mimicked the ultimate refreshment of the soul in purgatory'.⁶⁴ A bequest of four pounds was intended to provide bread for prisoners in four London prisons over a six-month period. Here, it certainly can be said that there were elements of social status involved in the grants, and necessary attention to social problems which might result in disorder or challenges to the social system. Nonetheless, such motivations are subsumed within the general search for spiritual benefits for the soul in purgatory.

The five funerals examined in this essay have provided abundant evidence of Neill's 'pageant theater of death and mourning'.⁶⁵ Their symbolism, as others have noted, is multifaceted: grandiose displays of wealth and status; affirmations of rank in a hierarchical society, whose rulers thought themselves able to regulate the dress of its members in life through sumptuary laws, and in death to regulate their funerals according to status. Yet the whole performance is embedded in religious beliefs about the soul's experience after death. It was an essentially religious occasion, and it is no surprise that the religious culture should have matched and embodied the status-conscious values of Tudor society.

A core element in the drama of the funeral was the religious rituals performed by the clergy during the mass and office. They led the procession, and conducted the services in the church, in a variety of robes appropriate to rank, order, and particular rite. The idealized images of the office of the dead and requiem mass show celebrants costumed in rich, embroidered vestments, and the accounts of funerals refer to choirs and singing. It is important, then, to recognize the religious services themselves as an important part of the total dramatic performance. Support can be found in liturgical scholarship for what otherwise might appear inappropriate comment. An eminent authority on the liturgy, Rev. Joseph A. Jungmann, has described the medieval mass as 'a holy drama, a play performed

⁶⁴ Schen, *Charity and Lay Piety*, p. 57. Schen also notes that such bequests were a small but consistent part of charitable grants and remained so during the early stages of the Reformation.

⁶⁵ Neill, "Exeunt with a Dead March", p. 154.

before the eyes of the participants, [...] with its Latin chanting and its mystery-filled ceremonies'.⁶⁶

Modern distinctions between the religious and the secular have little application in the context of pre-Reformation society; rather the evidence of elite London funerals appears to indicate a happy integration of personal and civic aspirations with the doctrines and services offered by the Church. Andrew Pettegrew's comment that 'England was a country with a deep, rich and richly enjoyed religious culture' in the period immediately before the changes introduced by Henry VIII⁶⁷ seems to find strong support in the wills and funeral pageantry considered here. Yet they may nonetheless offer a clue towards answering the question why Purgatory, chantries, and the associated services of the clergy could be dispensed with entirely in the 1540s, along with other valued aspects of old Catholicism. The degree of commitment imposed by the dead on the living by the costs of funerals, the endowment of continuing prayers and masses, the demands for attendance at month's minds and obits, and the organization of doles for the poor and their presence at ceremonies may have become oppressive. Peter Marshall has provided evidence of the Goldsmiths and Drapers limiting their obligation to attend obits in 1497 and 1519 respectively, but notes the heavy continuing burden on the London craft guilds.⁶⁸ Simon Fish clearly thought that he appealed to a body of anticlerical opinion when he made his attack on the transfer of wealth to the clergy through the doctrine of Purgatory. Perhaps when the royal head of the Church issued dictates to his people that were in any case hard to resist,⁶⁹ the Civic elite was more disposed to accept the separation of 'the pageant of death and mourning' from its original doctrinal and ritual underpinnings because this promised some relief from the financial pressures and demands of social obligation imposed by the existing system. Change was also more acceptable, no doubt, because a great deal of the ceremonial and display of the splendid burial survived the religious transition with so little change.

⁶⁶ Jungmann, *Mass of the Roman Rite*, II, 107. My friend Bernard Muggeridge drew my attention to the importance of this source.

⁶⁷ Andrew Pettegrew, 'A. G. Dickens and his Critics: A New Narrative of the English Reformation', *Historical Research*, 77 (2004), 39–58 (p. 51).

⁶⁸ Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead*, p. 45.

⁶⁹ For Henry VIII's dominance of religious policy-making and insistence on obedience to the government, see G. W. Bernard, 'The Making of Religious Policy, 1533–1546: Henry VIII and the Search for the Middle Way', *Historical Journal*, 41 (1998), 321–49.

IRONY AND TRANSCENDENCE ON THE RENAISSANCE STAGE

Laurence Wright

Irony even in its simplest forms involves a measure of transcendence, some assertion of superiority in terms of knowledge or wisdom or social standing. The connection may not always be obvious. It is typically muted when we meet the term as a feature of verbal rhetoric, as for example in the succinct definition offered by Cicero: ‘aliter sentias ac loquere’ — saying one thing and meaning another.¹ Rhetorical practice of this kind must have inhered in human speech well prior to its conceptual formulation. Quintilian’s ‘laudis adsimulatione detrahare et vituperationis laudare’, blaming by seeming to praise,² is readily ratified in speech acts overheard on many a school playground. The required ‘put down’ is carried through tone, gesture, and context, as part of a crude arsenal of mockery, which may culminate in sarcasm. Naturally its literary forms are more nuanced, depending on the intellectual command of the practitioner. In his *Scienza Nuovo* (1725), Vico identified irony as one of the four primary tropes, alongside metaphor, synecdoche, and metonymy, describing it as ‘fashioned of a falsehood by dint of a reflection which wears the mask of truth’.³ This formulation opens up sophisticated reaches of ironical discourse where much more than verbal strategy is implied. Originally, if we follow the line that irony derives from the Greek *eironeia*,

¹ *De Oratore*, trans. by E. W. Sutton and H. Rackham, Loeb Classical Library, 2 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1952), I, 2. 67. 272–73.

² *The Institutio Oratoria of Quintilian*, trans. by H. E. Butler, Loeb Classical Library, 4 vols (New York: Heinemann, 1921), III, 8. 5. 58–59.

³ *The New Science of Giambattista Vico*, trans. by Thomas Goddard Bergin and Max Harold Fisch (New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1961), p. 90.

a form of behaviour involving strategic self-abasement of which the Platonic Socrates would be the prime example, then there is inherently a significant discrepancy in knowledge, wisdom, even in *Weltanschauung*, between the Socratic posture of professed ignorance and foolishness and the hapless objects of his philosophical interrogations, caught as they typically are in habitual, socialized points of view. The professed inadequacy of the interrogator triumphs over, or transcends, the assumed knowledge of those interrogated. The pose, or method, of philosophical ignorance and humility proves to be a device to expose the inadequacy of conventional wisdom. The *eirōn* was typically, and quite understandably, abused for his pains.⁴

The later notion of *dramatic* irony was introduced into academic criticism in Britain and the United States largely through the influence of Connop Thirlwall's famous essay of 1833, 'On the Irony of Sophocles',⁵ but it is important to recognize that intrinsically, in its very structure, there is always something dramatic about irony, because there must always be an implied audience. There would be no point in employing irony unless an extended audience of some kind is deemed capable of appreciating the assertion of superiority. Irony is designed to be overheard, which makes it both social and potentially dramatic. A formal consideration of dramatic irony shifts the focus of attention to the possible responses of an attending audience, to the act of overhearing an exchange on the stage, and the range of emotive and intellectual responses that becomes salient. This act of attention, of participation, by the audience is essentially imaginative, an adjudication between two (or more) sides in dialogic interchange. It is an invitation to imaginative transcendence. For instance, while obviously 'staged' in the mind, I would argue that the following passage from the *Iliad* impels some intimation of dramatic irony, in that the reader is forced to adjudicate between the standpoints of gods and mortals:

Athene and the lord of the silver bow, Apollo,
assuming the likeness of birds, of vultures, settled
aloft the great oak tree of their father, Zeus of the aegis,
taking their ease and watching these men whose ranks, dense-settled,
shuddering into a bristle of spears, of shields and of helmets.
As when the shudder of the west wind suddenly rising

⁴ G. C. Sedgwick, *Of Irony: Especially in Drama*, 2nd edn (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1948), pp. 19–20.

⁵ Connop Thirlwall, 'On the Irony of Sophocles', *Philological Museum*, 2 (1833), 483–587; repr. in *Sophocles: The Classical Heritage*, ed. by R. D. Dawe (New York: Garland, 1996), pp. 179–223.

Scatters across the water, and the water darkens beneath it,
so darkening were the settled ranks of Achaians and Trojans
In the plain. (7. 58–66)⁶

The passage sets before the reader a disturbing double vision where the gods 'taking their ease' adopt the guise and perspective of vultures to revel in the impending battle, while the massed armies below carry with them the importunate terrors and heroism of mortal combat, captured in that darkening shudder of the west wind. What matters here is that the gap separating the two positions could be construed either in terms of ontological transcendence, or separation, whereby the spheres of mortals and the gods are distinct but confluent (this would constitute the view of naïve literalism); or else the more sophisticated reader might be aware that he or she is exploring a complex form of dramatic irony which coaxes the 'audience' into recognizing the doubleness of the human response to war, part 'vulture', part vulnerable combatant. The sophisticated audience translates fictive ontology into salient epistemology. The thesis and antithesis within the represented world force the audience to explore a troubling imaginative synthesis more complex than either.

Matters are no different when the elements of dramatic irony move into the theatre proper. There is perforce a tension between naïve imaginative submission to the reality presented, which involves lending credence to the cosmological structure of the presented world, on the one hand, and detached, self-conscious appreciation of its fictive status, its self-conscious theatricality, on the other, in which cosmic transcendence registers as epistemology in the form of irony. In the first case, the gods and their *habitus* are real; in the second, their status and interventions on stage are as fictive as the rest of the presentation. Audience members negotiate meaning through exploring this tension in complex interaction with their own outlook and beliefs. My thesis in this essay is, first, that the representation of transcendence on the Renaissance stage, that 'going beyond' the human to share the perspective of the gods or the afterlife, is an important means by which the riches of dramatic irony are created for the self-conscious audience. Second, there is often a continuum of structured irony at work on the Renaissance stage, from minutiae of verbal interchange up to grand cosmological suppositions, as an important structural principle informing responses to the drama. Take away the machinery of transcendence and what remains is often a repertoire of rather empty ironies celebrating the stage as a metaphor for the world.

⁶ *The Iliad*, trans. by Richmond Lattimore (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), pp. 169–70.

Regarded as a simple binary, stage and world from one perspective can seem a sterile pairing in which any self-conscious exploration of ontological 'levels' might be strained or simply inappropriate. We think, for example, of Beaumont and Fletcher's *Four Plays in One* (1608?–1613?) which subordinates actual spectators in the theatre to the transports of an entire court audience re-created on stage.⁷ Although this piece is contemporaneous with some of Shakespeare's boldest essays in theatricality in his mature plays, here the intent is no more than to yoke together four masques or playlets that make up a nuptial entertainment, two by Beaumont and two by Fletcher, by supplying a courtly context. King Emanuel and Queen Isabella of Portugal 'take their seat on the throne' halfway through the Induction and, while they are addressed indirectly at the conclusion of each of the four 'Triumphs', their dramatic contribution is negligible. Or we might consider Massinger's Suetonian piece, *The Roman Actor* (1626), which contains no fewer than three overt 'plays-within-the-play': *The Cure of Avarice*, *Iphis and Anaxerete*, and *The False Servant*.⁸ At one point, Aretinus remarks to Paris the Tragedian:

Are you on the Stage,
You talke so boldly?

Paris responds:

The whole world being one
This place is not exempted. (I. 3. 48–51)

This flat, matter-of-fact treatment of the potentially rich and fertile notion of theatre as a metaphor for life is markedly routine and patent. Later in the same play Caesar says:

Why are you
Transported thus, *Domitia*? 'tis a play,
Or grant it serious, it at no part merits
This passion in you. (III. 2. 282–85)

In the first quotation, the stage is reduced to or merged with the world; in the second the power of drama to impinge on the world is denied. In both instances, the effect is tired, somewhat nugatory. A Baroque climax to this tendency was reached in the *entracte* contrived by Bernini for an unidentified comedy presented

⁷ *Four Plays, or Moral Representations, in One*, in *The Works of Beaumont and Fletcher*, ed. by George Darley, 2 vols (London: Routledge, Warne & Routledge, 1862), II, 500–25.

⁸ *The Roman Actor*, in *The Plays and Poems of Philip Massinger*, ed. by Philip Edwards and Colin Gibson, 5 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), III, 21–93.

at his home in Rome for the Carnival of 1637, where, as proceedings started, a curtain separating two audiences, one real, the other 'fictive' and on stage, was withdrawn so that they faced each other. The element of ironical mirroring was central to the conceit. Two braggart artist-clowns (played, in Chantelou's account of Bernini's recollections, by Bernini and his brother) mediated between the audiences, each asserting the reality of *their* audience and the illusory nature of their rival's. Having worked hard to maintain this strict equivalence of ontological confusion and illusion, the two audiences were then separated once more by the curtain. The intended comedy was played before the real audience, accompanied by teasing bursts of laughter from behind the curtain, supposedly emanating from an invisible and unknowable performance occurring there. At the play's end, the two clowns reappeared, one of them heavily out of breath. Asked to explain this, he responded that it was a result of effort expended in producing a spectacle to conclude his presentation behind the curtain. The curtain was again drawn aside to reveal a lengthy and lavish pageant showing an audience leaving a theatre, its sequence rounded off with the figure of Death entering on horseback, scythe in hand. One of the clowns explained to the audience that death ends all earthly pleasures and had arrived to end theirs. The actual audience's subsequent departure then deftly mirrored that of the illusory one.⁹ Despite a level of seriousness and visual sumptuousness, from a theatrical point of view it was overwrought and rather meaningless. Here is mirroring without transcendence, irony as *mere* irony. But this, of course, exemplifies the idea of theatricality as a metaphor for life in its decadence — using the term descriptively rather than pejoratively.

To probe the validity of the thesis I have articulated, we must return to an earlier period when the analogically layered cosmos of Renaissance Neoplatonism, melding with Christian mythography, was the stuff out of which plays were made. The early Tudor playwrights did their best to ally fact, fate, character, environment, human choice, and contingency to a ritual pattern familiar from the old plays: the primal Edenic model of paradise, error, fall, descent into suffering and chaos, followed by hope and restitution. We can look as far back as Norton and Sackville's *Gorboduc* (1565) or Preston's *Cambyses* (1569–70), a play still graced with morality characters like Shame, Diligence, Common's Cry, Cruelty, and Murder; or forward to later works like *The Misfortunes of Arthur* (c. 1588) and *The Troublesome Raigne of King John of England* (c. 1589) to see the events of history

⁹ Richard Bernheimer, 'Theatrum Mundi', *Art Bulletin*, 38 (1956), 225–47; and Robert Fahrner and William Kleb, 'The Theatrical Activity of Gianlorenzo Bernini', *Educational Theatre Journal*, 25 (1973), 5–14.

tied ineluctably to these older patterns.¹⁰ Such plays embody stories of kings and their flaws and mistakes, which result in fearful political chaos and suffering for their subjects, a countersurge of resistance, and the eventual restoration of order under a new, upright monarch. This at base is why Tudor drama is politically conservative: it operates uncertainly and tentatively against the myth of a foundational cosmic order which must ultimately reassert itself. This order is somehow mystically resistant to the presumed folly of political and social transformation, and disruption will be, must be, short-lived, wasteful, and ultimately nugatory.

It seems to be the peculiar task of the stage metaphor, the notion of the theatre as a metaphor for life, to interrogate the tension between this inscrutable cosmic order and the limited viewpoints of ordinary humanity. The Neoplatonic presupposition of the stage as a sterile (yet imaginatively fertile) imitation of the world points towards that subversive sense of the 'playwright-gods' arranging matters for their own delectation, in life as in the theatre. This is particularly evident in the revenge genre, where the revenger often becomes more than a mere actor, and something of a would-be playwright, in apparent tension with the dramatist proper. There are few more cogent examples of the theatrical metaphor working to powerful moral and metaphysical effect than that one-off wonder, Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy* (1587?), where the revenge topos is actualized through overhearing (as an 'audience') or instigating (as quasi actor-producers) a sequence of strategic playlets.¹¹ *The Spanish Tragedy* approaches 'life' as an infinite ontological regression of plays-within-plays, related to each other through irony, and offering multiple opportunities for species of faux transcendence, all of which collapse save for the final legacy of mordant wisdom which is the play's gift to its audience. Here we see at work the full-blown potential of the play conceived as Neoplatonic microcosm, as a theatrical imitation that works by ontological analogy, drawing any reasonably sophisticated audience into the epistemological nets of dramatic irony.

The thoroughgoing *mise en abyme* of *The Spanish Tragedy*, usefully explored by John Kerrigan and Michael Neill among others, offers a painfully apt demonstration of the ironic vacuity that, as a matter of necessity, constitutes and informs the

¹⁰ Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton, *Gorboduc: or, Ferrex and Porrex*, ed. by Irby B. Cauthen, Jr (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1970); *A Critical Edition of Thomas Preston's Cambises*, ed. by Robert Carl Johnson (Salzburg: Institut für Englische Sprache und Literatur, Universität Salzburg, 1975); *The Misfortunes of Arthur: A Critical, Old-Spelling Edition*, ed. by Brian Jay Corrigan (New York: Garland, 1992); *The Troublesome Raigne of John, King of England*, ed. by J. W. Sider (New York: Garland, 1979).

¹¹ *The Spanish Tragedy*, ed. by J. R. Mulryne, 2nd edn (London: A&C Black, 1989).

'stage-as-world' metaphor.¹² The play-proper is framed by the story of a dead man, Don Andrea, killed in the war between Spain and Portugal, who in the underworld is promised that revenge will be exacted upon his killer, Don Balthazar. Accompanied by the allegorical figure of Revenge, he returns to the world to watch a play called *The Spanish Tragedy*, thereby offering the audience in the theatre a transcendent vantage point, a fictive perspective beyond the grave, on the cusp of the afterlife. In the story that unfolds, Hieronimo, marshal of Spain, seeks retributive justice following the murder of his only son, Horatio. The piece insists forcibly that life is not only like a play, but that it is a play. In Act II, scene 2, for instance, the audience watches as Balthazar and Lorenzo overhear the love-talk between Horatio and Bel-Imperia. In language reminiscent of the passage from the *Iliad* quoted earlier, Susan Joy writes 'If, in this scene, Balthazar and Lorenzo are placed above, the two levels existing in the text become a visually sinister tableau, from which, vulture-like, the murderers literally descend on their vulnerable prey':¹³

BEL-IMPERIA. But whereon doest thou chiefly meditate?
 HORATIO. On dangers past, and pleasures to ensue.
 BALTHAZAR. On pleasures past, and dangers to ensue.
 BEL-IMPERIA. What dangers and what pleasures dost thou mean?
 HORATIO. Dangers of war and pleasures of our love.
 LORENZO. Dangers of death, but pleasures none at all. (II. 2. 26–31)

The neo-Senecan stychomythia emphasizes, line for line, the flat contradiction between the lovers' preoccupations and those of their (concealed) audiences, on and off the stage. The real-world audience at this point is contemplating a triple-perspective while working away at a fourth, namely its own. We sympathize with the hapless couple, we recognize the 'vulture-like' motives driving the concealed Balthazar and Lorenzo, we are aware of the even more elevated perspective we share with the watching Don Andrea and Revenge, and we are ourselves grappling with the multiple verbal ironies echoing across this poised structure of impending dramatic ironies. As the play moves forward, we watch with Revenge and the ghostly Don Andrea as they watch the Kings of Spain and Portugal, who in turn follow the performances of Lorenzo, Balthazar, Bel-Imperia, and Hieronimo in the play *Soliman and Perseda*, whose plot mirrors the play as a whole, and which

¹² John Kerrigan, *Revenge Tragedy: Aeschylus to Armageddon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); Michael Neill, *Issues of Death: Mortality and Identity in English Renaissance Tragedy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).

¹³ Susan E. Joy, 'The Kyd/Marlowe Connection', *Notes and Queries*, 33 (1986), 338–39 (p. 339).

Hieronimo stages in order to kill all his enemies. This ultimate play-within-the-play undoes the carefully arranged Chinese-box effect of the other plays-within-plays by reducing most of the cast to corpses. Hieronimo reveals to the appalled wedding guests that the supposedly simulated deaths on stage were in fact real. He bites his tongue off on stage to avoid explanation (a grotesquerie usually achieved courtesy of a sliver of raw liver), then tricks the hapless (and guiltless) Duke into giving him a knife, stabs the Duke, and kills himself.

The effect is at once deeply estranging and vivifying, not something that can be intuited merely from studying the text.¹⁴ The inarticulacy of the corpses speaks volumes, a pungent enactment of the philosophical point made abstractly by the entrance of the figure of Death in the Bellini finale discussed above. The cast of the play-within-the-play thought they were acting a multiple murder; they were in fact living it. What if the cast of *The Spanish Tragedy* were similarly tricked and deluded? And we ourselves? This is the pendant question. Only our privileged fictive position as transcendent observers shelters us from comparable catastrophe and delusion. We are finally situated, with Revenge and Don Andrea, on the fringes of the imagined world, disempowered and alone, to evaluate the farrago of tangled ironies we have witnessed, something a great deal more disconcerting than the superficial judgements handed down by Don Andrea and Revenge to officially conclude the piece. What energizes Kyd's play is the tension between limited human motivation and awareness (here the desire for personal revenge as a form of justice) and ineluctable submission to an ultimate cosmic verdict which plays havoc with any such conscious intervention. The denouement illustrates Schopenhauer's thought-provoking contention that life is organized for the species and cares nothing for the individual.¹⁵ The collapse of the transcendent perspectives Kyd builds into his play turns serious, responsible human intent into a particularly bleak and desperate form of 'playing', and the audience is left to synthesize a disconcerting epistemological residue of ironies.

As the example of *The Spanish Tragedy* suggests, the power of the theatrical metaphor has much to do with the staged representation of transcendence and its ambiguous collapse into irony. Yet, oddly, and all appearances to the contrary, the unique creative surge of the Renaissance in England was not, fundamentally, directed towards transcendence, to that straightforward upward striving for the

¹⁴ The comment is based on Michael Bogdanov's 1982 production at the National Theatre in London, with Michael Bryant as Hieronimo.

¹⁵ For example, *The World as Will and Representation*, trans. by E. J. F. Payne, 2 vols (New York: Dover, 1969), I, 154.

heavenly city assumed in different ways by philosophy and religion, but instead one of lateral exploration, not only geographical exploration, but political and psychological exploration. It was a pulling against the great hierarchical myths of order inherited from Plato and Aristotle and elaborated by the scholastics. Earlier, in the Italian Renaissance, we note the awe with which the complex figure of Petrarch was regarded, indeed the stress and puzzlement which his own variousness created in the poet himself. With Petrarch, the fiction of singular identity, of the stable role and occupation, undergoes seemingly limitless lateral extrapolation as he matches his literary variety to the range of his interests. He becomes the lover, the textual scholar, the mysterious secular recluse, the confidante and friend, the Christian, the national poet, above all, the exile, the weary wanderer athirst in the desert of his times. In place of a fixed and delimited social character, the medieval stereotype, Petrarch seemingly challenges himself to live out a rich basket of roles, and to dramatize his variousness as the key to his public persona.¹⁶

Petrarch was ahead of himself, exceptional, a monument to the discovery of the malleability of the self. He was also a forerunner of the Renaissance preoccupation with self-fashioning so ably explored by Stephen Greenblatt in his early book.¹⁷ The triumph of early modern drama starts from measuring actual life, actual people and events, against transcendent ontological schemes inherited from the past. This lateral exploration finds expression in the multifarious manuals purporting to establish the ideal character of particular institutions or occupations. One thinks of Castiglione's *Courtier*, Elyot's *Magistrate*, and Ascham's *Scholemaster*, while More's *Utopia* and Bacon's *New Atlantis* set out to refashion whole societies. Alberti studies the Florentine family, Machiavelli, the prince or ruler.¹⁸ In such writings, the variousness of social roles is being elaborated laterally in a manner analogous to the way in which Petrarch had explored the complexity of his own

¹⁶ Ernest Hatch Wilkins, *Life of Petrarch* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961).

¹⁷ Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

¹⁸ Baldessare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, ed. by Daniel Javitch, trans. by Charles S. Singleton, Norton Critical Edition (New York: Norton, 2002); Thomas Elyot, *The Mirror for Magistrates*, ed. by Lily B. Campbell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938); Roger Ascham, *The Scholemaster* (New York: Da Capo, 1968); Thomas More, *Utopia*, ed. by George M. Logan and Robert M. Adams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Francis Bacon, *The New Atlantis* (London: J. M. Dent, 1916); Leon Battista Alberti, *The Family in Renaissance Florence*, trans. by Renée Neu Watkins (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1969); Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1961).

being. These exploratory works express an emergent confidence in the formative power of education in the broadest sense, sounding perhaps the keynote of humanism; but one of the most striking features of this development was its uncertainty about vertical limits, its problematic relation to transcendent aspiration. Often the theatrical metaphor is called on to ironize the transcendent impulse.

The brashest of claims to the liberty of infinite upward mobility in a metaphysical sense is to be found in Giovanni Pico's *Oration*, followed closely by Vives's *Fabula de Homine*. In the former, God tells humanity, 'thou [...] shalt ordain for thyself the limits of thy nature [...] thou shalt have the power, out of thy soul's judgment, to be reborn into the higher forms, which are divine'.¹⁹ In the latter Vives writes, 'The gods were not expecting to see him ['man'] in more shapes when, behold, he was remade into one of their own race, surpassing the nature of man and relying entirely upon a very wise mind'.²⁰ There seems in these thinkers to be not only a pervasive uncertainty as to the limits of humane learning, but an ardent faith in its capacity to take humanity beyond the human. Delight in the power of intellectual formation achievable through study merges imperceptibly with doctrines of transcendence. *Humanitas* melds into hermeticism without embarrassment. Pico can laud magic as 'the utter perfection of natural philosophy' (p. 247), while at the same time telling us that the magus weds 'earth to heaven, that is, he weds lower things to the endowments and powers of higher things' (p. 249). We are not far from the cry of Marlowe's Faustus, 'a sound magician is a mighty god' (I. 1. 64),²¹ or, indeed, from Shakespeare's Prospero, whose magical powers have been fostered by his apprenticeship to 'closeness' (I. 2. 90) and 'the liberal arts' (I. 2. 73).²²

Pico's *Oration* and Vives's *Fable* are each framed in terms of the theatre, Pico's work fleetingly in Abd Allah's opening claim that on this stage of the world,

¹⁹ Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, 'Oration on the Dignity of Man', trans. by Elizabeth Livermore Jones, in *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man*, ed. by Ernst Cassirer and others (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), pp. 223–54 (p. 225). Further page references in the text are to this translation.

²⁰ Juan Luis Vives, 'A Fable About Man', trans. by Nancy Lenkeith, in *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man*, ed. by Cassirer and others, pp. 387–93 (p. 389). Further page references in the text are to this translation.

²¹ Christopher Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus: A- and B-texts (1604, 1616)*, ed. by David Bevington and Eric Rasmussen (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), A-text: p. 114.

²² Unless specified, all Shakespeare references are to the *Complete Works*, ed. by Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

“There is nothing to be seen more wonderful than man” (p. 223); and in Vives’s *Fable*, which has as its organizing principle the conceit of the world as Jupiter’s theatre, we read:

Thereupon, all of a sudden, at a command of mighty Jupiter, since he was all-powerful, by whom alone all things are done, this whole world appeared, so large, so elaborate, so diversified, and beautiful in places, just as you see it. This was the amphitheatre: uppermost, to wit in the skies, were the stalls and seats of the divine spectators; nethermost — some say in the middle — the earth was placed as a stage for the appearance of the actors, along with all the animals and everything else. (p. 387)

Humanity’s self-fashioning is a form of acting, of playing a part, challenging old roles and inventing new ones, impersonating the gods by becoming ‘that multiform Proteus, the son of the Ocean’ (p. 389). The big issue, of course, is whether humans can indeed write their own parts, or whether they can only play parts already written for them by the playwright-gods, the whole enterprise being overshadowed with the suspicion that acting is as immoral in its philosophical implications as it is socially suspect, delicious, and dangerous. We recall the Duke of Gloucester’s claim at the climax of his soliloquy in 3 *Henry VI*:

Why, I can smile, and murder whiles I smile,
And cry ‘Content!’ to that which grieves my heart,
And wet my cheeks with artificial tears,
And frame my face to all occasions. (III. 2. 182–85)

He will, he tells us

Deceive more slyly than Ulysses could,
And, like a Sinon, take another Troy.
I can add colors to the chameleon,
Change shapes with Proteus for advantages,
And set the murderous Machiavel to school. (III. 2. 189–93)

The speech is a stunning prospectus for his later career as Shakespeare’s Richard III, that chameleon-like, protean Machiavel who takes charge of the play from his opening speech. More interesting from our point of view is Hamlet, who has that lateral variousness of character we expect in a renaissance hero, ‘The courtier’s, soldier’s, scholar’s, eye, tongue, sword’ (III. 1. 154) mourned by Ophelia, and who strives to take charge of his predicament through the medium of the actor’s art, trying in vain to ‘Suit the action to the word, the word to the action’ (III. 2. 17–18), as he has advised his players to do. This is self-fashioning as acting, using art to shape conduct. As Brian Pearce puts it, Hamlet ‘tries to use his skill as an actor and a dramatist to alter the course of the play in which he is an unwilling victim. The solution that Hamlet seeks is an artistic one. By perfecting his own performance,

he hopes to conquer the political realm'.²³ In the end, of course, he fails in his intent, but succeeds by accident (if one accepts the presumption that Fortinbras is a harbinger of better days). The ancient contest between free will and determinism, freedom and prescience, lies at the heart of this paradox, and close to the heart of the theatrical metaphor. Hamlet captures it very neatly:

There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will — (v. 2. 10–11)

Tom Stoppard recounts what he believes to be a well-authenticated story which casts light on the linguistic matrix from which this figure is drawn:

some fifty years ago a man strolling through the leafy lanes near Stratford-upon-Avon came across two men who were working on tidying up the hedge. He stopped to watch them and saw that they were working as a team, the one in front hacking away at the hedge and the one following snipping at it. On being questioned, the old man doing the hacking explained, 'Well, you see, I rough-hews them, and he shapes their ends'.²⁴

This at base is the same gap between mere human apprehension and an inscrutable cosmic plan we saw in Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy*, conceived here somewhat more modestly from the standpoint of humanity rather than those vulture-like playwright-gods. The figure teasingly amends the traditionally vertical trajectory of spiritual aspiration, the conventional ontological perspective, for one which emphasizes an ironical thwarting of ordinary human intent by supplementary divine intervention. Hamlet is consciously far from a Marlovian over-reacher. Indeed, his interjection at II. 2. 312 reads like a deliberate challenge to the exuberant paeans of transcendent afflatus offered by men such as Pico and Vives:

What a piece of work is a man! How noble
in reason, how infinite in faculty, in form and moving
how express and admirable, in action how like an
angel, in apprehension how like a god — the beauty of
the world, the paragon of animals! And yet to me, what
is this quintessence of dust? (II. 2. 305–10)

²³ Brian Pearce, 'Hamlet the Actor', unpublished paper, 2006, pp. 1–9 (p. 5). Related issues concerning the early modern self, inwardness, and the representation of consciousness in *Hamlet* are usefully explored in John Lee, *Shakespeare's Hamlet and the Controversies of Self* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); and David Schalkwyk, *Speech and Performance in Shakespeare's Sonnets and Plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

²⁴ Tom Stoppard, 'Is It True What They Say about Shakespeare?', in *International Shakespeare Association Occasional Paper*, No. 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 1–13 (pp. 12–13).

He expressly cautions his actors not to 'o'erstep [...] the modesty of nature' (III. 2. 19). Yet, as we see from his behaviour and language, for example in the gravedigger scene, he can ignore his own advice and strut and bellow with the best of them: 'This is I, | Hamlet the Dane' (V. 1. 253–54). This complex contradictoriness, a kind of Petrarchan variousness melding with early modern naturalism, contributes to what Rosenberg describes as the 'asymmetry' of Hamlet's character, noting that he is

One who can love and hate, mourn and rejoice, befriend and destroy, have faith and doubt and cheer and heart-ache, seek meaning in this life and the next, hope and be hopeless, laugh and weep, meditate and do, philosophize and politicize, seem mad and sane, tell truth and lies, speak soaring poetry and salty prose and sing jingles, play and fight, contrive and fall prey to contrivance, worship one parent and scorn another, cherish and kill — a troubled mortal, and an actor acting one.²⁵

This suggestive description of Hamlet's asymmetry, a paradoxical richness of character that threatens any simple assessment, nudges me towards a further speculation about the relation between transcendence and dramatic irony on the Renaissance stage. In *Culture and Value*, Wittgenstein has written,

The reason why I cannot understand Shakespeare is that I want to find symmetry in all this asymmetry. His pieces give me an impression as of enormous *sketches* rather than of paintings; as though they had been *dashed off* by someone who can permit himself *anything*, so to speak.²⁶

Shakespeare's art accepts and rejoices in contingency. Yet art must have form. I suspect that Wittgenstein's distinction between a sketch and a painting, and his preference for the latter, stems from his sense that a sketch remains implicated in the contingency of the world; it is a tentative model that both hints at, mis-takes, and draws on the reality towards which it gestures, whereas a painting lays claim to some kind of autonomous interpretive completeness, like the mirroring picture-world of the *Tractatus*. In contrast, when Wittgenstein characterizes his later philosophical effort, in the Preface to the *Philosophical Investigations*, it is in terms of a partially ordered but ultimately unsatisfactory collection of sketches and observations made while journeying in a landscape, some retained for later

²⁵ Marvin Rosenberg, *The Masks of Hamlet* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1992), pp. ix–x.

²⁶ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, ed. by G. H. von Wright and Heikki Nyman, trans. by Peter Wynch (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), p. 85.

contemplation, many others rejected as inadequate.²⁷ Perhaps Wittgenstein's amusingly peevisish frustration with Shakespeare arises from the extent to which the multiple ironies his plays generate leave even the most sophisticated audience with an immense amount of work still to do. Attempting to diagnose 'Wittgenstein's malaise', George Steiner mischievously cites 'a Continental (or, at least, gallic) instinct for orderly, closed forms of vision'.²⁸ No *one*, adequately realized performance or interpretation will suffice with Shakespeare. The finished painting fails to appear. Instead the audience is compelled to work away at a never-to-be-completed synthesis, assessing rich dialogic interchanges between characters and situations, while oscillating between the privileged, vulture-like vantage-point of the spectator and feelings of intense empathy with what is happening on stage. The theatre-metaphor offers the audience a putative transcendence, while the purpose of dramatic irony is ultimately to force the audience to enter the imaginary world as active participants. Transcendence and irony must stay in motile tension for the notion of theatre as a metaphor for life to strike home for the audience.

When we look to the plays most commonly acknowledged to represent the apex of Shakespeare's concern with the theatrical metaphor, *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*, what is not sufficiently acknowledged is that their tricky theatricality is matched by an equally powerful, if more subtle, freighting of antitheatrical, antitranscendent irony. The statue scene in *The Winter's Tale*, that *coup de théâtre* which resolves and dissolves the play's thematic preoccupations, is obviously to be understood in terms both of natural and theatrical magic, as both miracle and trickery. Once more we see gestures towards transcendence being undercut by theatricality and in consequence provoking a demand for ironical synthesis. Paulina is both a benevolent magician — because of the genuine change her actions bring about in Leontes — and a trickster, not too dissimilar from Autolycus, who unbeknownst to everyone preserves Hermione at the cost of deceiving both Leontes and the audience. Her linguistic art which, in partnership with the audience's greatly abused suspension of disbelief, invokes the illusion of Hermione as a statue, is magnificently fraudulent and implicates the total theatrical enterprise. The unparalleled deception points directly to mischievous playwright-gods who contrive Paulina as an agent of 'redemption', not only for Leontes and his family, but for the

²⁷ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus*, trans. by D. F. Pears and B. F. McGuinness (London: Routledge, 1974); Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. by G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967).

²⁸ George Steiner, 'A Reading Against Shakespeare', in *No Passion Spent: Essays 1978–1996* (London: Faber and Faber, 1996), pp. 108–28.

audience in the theatre. Read in this way, the play's profound concern with repentance becomes psychological rather than miraculous, or rather, miraculous in a resolutely ironical mode. (Think of Wittgenstein's 'duck-rabbit'.)²⁹

This ultimate reduction to the irony of psychological manipulation is not solely a consequence of Shakespeare's preoccupation with the theatrical metaphor. He introduces an inescapable element of psychological realism. In the second scene of Act I, until line 42, Leontes is presented as a rational man struggling with unwarrantable suspicions concerning his wife's faithfulness. Then Shakespeare does something wholly unprecedented: he dramatizes the moment when Leontes' rationality collapses, and he does so in terms borrowed from Renaissance psychology:

Most dear'st, my Collop: can thy Dam, may't be
Affection! Thy Intention stabs the Center.
Thou do'st make possible things not so held,
Communicat'st with Dreames (how can this be?)
With what's vnreall: thou coactiue art,
And fellow'st nothing. Then 'tis very credent,
Thou may'st co-ioyne with something, and thou do'st,
(And that beyond Commission) and I find it,
(And that to the infection of my Braines,
And hardning of my Browes). (I. 2. 137–46)³⁰

Leontes is pursuing rationally the possibility that his excessive perturbation may be the result of an 'Affection', a severe mental upheaval occasioned by a delusory psychological image (or 'Intention') which plunges to the very centre of his being, bypassing the rational faculty. In other words, the images that torture him of Hermione canoodling with Polixenes may be false, because it is known that such images may on occasion be informed by mere 'Dreames' divorced from any basis in reality. Following the caesura in line 42, he reasons as follows: 'If images can cooperate with dreams or delusions, rooted in nothing, how much more can they "conjoin" (or meld) with realities; and they do, even more than I had anticipated, and it is exactly as I feared: I am a cuckold.' The tortured syntax renders graphically for the actor the terrifying overthrow of Leontes' rational judgement.³¹ Shakespeare thus provides a naturalistic explanation for the disruption of the Sicilian

²⁹ Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, pp. 194–96.

³⁰ Folio transcript from Appendix 1 of Arden edition of *The Winter's Tale*, ed. by J. H. P. Pafford (London: Methuen, 1963), p. 165.

³¹ Laurence Wright, 'When Does the Tragic-comic Disruption Start?: *The Winter's Tale* and Leontes' "Affection"', *English Studies*, 70 (1989), 225–32 (p. 230).

court, one which in effect ironizes the full sweep of moral transgression and repentance that follows in the course of the play. Any reasonably cheerful interpretation of *The Winter's Tale* involving transcendent playwright-gods, patrons of tragicomedy, who contrive the play's sombre emotional resolution culminating in the statue scene, is drastically undermined by the knowledge that these same gods have that vulture-like quality responsible for instigating the initial psychological aberration, that genetically based synaptic mis-function (to drag the diagnosis into our own age), which sets the painful train of events in motion at the outset.

Turning to *The Tempest*, we find a similar undercutting of theatrical transcendence. We are familiar with readings that stress the play's meta-theatricality: its use of masque-like interventions to teach the good (Ferdinand and Miranda at their betrothal masque) and upbraid the wicked (the 'three men of sin' at the vanishing banquet, and Caliban, Stephano, and Trinculo in their pursuit by the Ovidian spirit-hounds), and the rich, overarching sense of life as a dream, ephemeral as a play. The second scene recasts 'the direful spectacle of the wreck' as magical illusion; the collapse of the betrothal masque in Act IV leaves not a rack behind (think of the sound of the word); and audience applause is to fill the sails of an imaginary vessel sending the disenchanted mage back to Naples and Milan. The proliferation of illusions is grounded in the assertion that life itself will prove an insubstantial pageant. This is what Johan Huizinga meant when he wrote in *Homo Ludens* (1944) of the Renaissance play-metaphor being 'little more than an echo of the Neo-platonism that was then in vogue, with a markedly moralistic accent. It was a variation on the ancient theme of the vanity of things'.³²

To leave it at that is to accept the educative power of theatrical transcendence and miss the residual irony bobbing in the undercurrent of sadness *The Tempest* leaves in its silvery wake. The triumph of Prospero's art climaxes when Miranda and Ferdinand are discovered in his cell, quietly playing a game of chess, an aristocratic game which is at once a metaphor for the mating game, and emblematic of the successful political, diplomatic, and dynastic games their forthcoming union anticipates. The vignette is a moralizing rewrite of Virgil, where the equivalent episode is the unhallowed coupling of Dido and Aeneas in the cave, a faux pas that almost derails Aeneas's imperial mission to found Rome. In this sense, Prospero's art is immensely powerful, triumphantly successful, a portent for a new empire in the making. But there is a little-noticed passage of metatheatrical commentary in

³² Johan Huizinga, *Homo ludens*, trans. by R. F. C. Hull (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1949), p. 5.

The Tempest, a counterweight which proves illuminating. In Act II, scene 1, Sebastian says of the good old councillor, Gonzalo:

I think he will carry this island home in his pocket,
And give it his son for an apple.

And Antonio replies:

And sowing the kernels of it in the sea, bring forth more islands. (II. 1. 89–91)

There exists a well-attested strain of proverbial reference treating apples as a cure for inappropriate sexual ardour. Sebastian is mocking Gonzalo as the senex of classical comedy who would thwart nature by attempting to curb his offspring's sexual urges (something Prospero succeeds in with Miranda and Ferdinand, as we have seen). In so doing, according to Antonio's sardonic response, he inadvertently gives rise, thanks to the discarded apple seeds or kernels, to a proliferation of islands, each presumably as unsatisfactory, in the jaundiced view of Antonio and Sebastian, as the one on which they are presently stranded. The hint of onanism here, the scattering of 'unproductive' seed, helps dramatize the tension between two of the play's most profound preoccupations: the contrast and contest between biological and dramatic ways of reproducing the world or, to put it another way, between the drama of generation and the generation of drama.³³

Immediately preceding the apple topos, Gonzalo's identification of contemporary Tunis with ancient Carthage, mocked by Antonio in the reference to Amphion's miraculous harp, together with his utopian prospectus for the island's future governance in the Golden Age speech shortly thereafter, places him in the line of visionary artists and heroes, such as Amphion and Orpheus, who give rise to cities by means of music and eloquence. Antonio and Sebastian (together with all the villains in the Shakespearean canon) clearly belong to the countertradition, the tradition of Cain and Romulus, where cities are founded or taken through cunning, treachery, siege, and rape. Sebastian's reference to the apple deftly places 'imagination' (and, by implication, plays and 'playing') among anodyne visions unsuited to the world of realpolitik, on a par with the otherworldly sexual communalism characteristic of Gonzalo's primitivist ideal. After all, it was Prospero's neglect of his princely duties in favour of exploring the world of art that led to the initial usurpation.

Huizinga's great book, *Homo ludens*, was shaped in part by its genesis during the Nazi scourge. Hitler claimed he was serious, that he was building a thousand-year

³³ Laurence Wright, 'Shakespeare's *The Tempest*', *The Explicator*, 61 (2003), 75–77 (p. 76).

Reich. Huizinga told us he was really playing a game, a deadly, brutal, futile game, but a game; and that authentic civilization is also built on games, but quite different ones. We see many of them in Shakespeare's plays: games of education, contests of eloquence, passages of diplomacy, plays enacted to catch the conscience of the king, songs and catches sung to define forever a mood or a moment. All such games are characterized by rule-governed ethical aspiration. In this sense they offer us models; not sterile desert islands but fleeting Platonic forms. They point away from the legacy of Cain and Romulus, of Antonio and Sebastian, and towards Hippolyta's 'something of great constancy' (see *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, v. 1. 26), something that emerges unasked when we play properly, when we nurture cities on music, theatre, and eloquence and learn to treasure Yeats's 'Monuments of un-ageing intellect'.³⁴ Unfortunately, many of those most expert in these games, like Prospero, forget all too readily 'the conspiracy of the foul beast Caliban against my life', and until Caliban, in his complex contemporary forms, is offered and accepts a proper place in the city, our revels will continue to be disrupted, and the cloud-capp'd towers will continue to fall. This is an irony Shakespeare insisted upon.

My thesis here is a deceptively simple one, namely, that the power and suggestiveness goes out of the theatre metaphor to the extent that claims for transcendence lose their hold on the human imagination. When the possibility of transcendence fades, what remains is mere irony. We should remember that other roughly contemporaneous Prospero figure from Spain, Don Quixote.³⁵ (Shakespeare borrowed from his story for the lost play *Cardenio*.) Where Shakespeare's Prospero loses his lands because his nose is buried in books which he prizes above his dukedom, and only regains them because this hermetic study proves fruitful and providence connives, our Spanish Prospero sells his lands to buy books, wonderful romance nonsenses that fuddle his head and fuel his forlorn and belated quest for chivalric fulfilment. This is Prospero in the age of the novel. The variousness is there, the shaggy asymmetry of contingent life, the poignant aspiration is there. But belief in transcendent possibility has become matter for gentle fun and constant mockery, while the lesson the Don is so persistently unwilling to learn is that of disillusionment, the leitmotif of the novel form.

It will not have gone unremarked that this essay is, in some respects, ahistorical. This is deliberate. Contemporary theatre studies seem all too often caught in a

³⁴ W. B. Yeats, 'Sailing to Byzantium', in *Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats* (London: Macmillan, 1952).

³⁵ Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quixote de la Mancha*, trans. by Charles Jarvis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

sterile conflict between versions of 'historicism' and 'presentism', with theatre historians making their tangential contributions from the sidelines by tracking diachronic shifts in theatrical conventions. The concept of irony, which under the aegis of the New Criticism once proffered almost talismanic interpretive currency, still has the potential to demarcate a zone of apprehension standing outside the contest between historicism and current relevance. It challenges the sophisticated audience or reader in all ages, going beyond the historian's question 'What does this mean?' to pose the ultimately more important corollary, 'What does this mean *to me*?' Irony is not an answer, but a call to respond and judge, either as transcendent 'vultures' or with the life's blood, as the bodies on the stage ('dead' or alive) so tellingly remind us.

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